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LETTERS OF
GEORGE MEREDITH

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George Meredith.
at the age of eighty.
from a photograph.

LETTERS OF GEORGE MEREDITH

COLLECTED AND EDITED BY

HIS SON

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

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LETTERS OF GEORGE MEREDITH

To Admiral Maxse.

Box Hill, *March* 19, 1882.

My dear Fred,—The news of the Governor is not so good as I had hoped, but often the changes are surprising, and health seems given from the hand, after a painful dragging on for weeks. I suppose things to be well with Olive. Your pen-sketches of scenery and the picture forwarded to Mariette give me a breath of the Riviera. But here also we have had Midsummer in March. Day upon day a cloudless heaven, strong sun-heat, flowers profuse, leaves bursting—a return of the bell' età d'oro. At present I count five months of predominating S.W. wind. I have known winters as mild, but never followed by so soft a Spring.—(Interrupted by the call of a cleric, an amiable and a Liberal, who informed me in the course of the conversation that he had recently been entertaining a 'pure agnostic.' In reply I informed him that I should find it hard to hit on a friend of mine who was not a pure agnostic. He took it mildly.)—Morison was here on Saturday, did not sleep here, as he has to finish his Macaulay for the Series.[1] He spoke of you, strongly appreciating you. He gave me a bad bit of news of Frederic Harrison's brother—thrown from his horse in the park and now lying in St. George's Hospital, paralysed all but two fingers: case apparently hopeless, and meanwhile his little girl has died of diphtheria.

Nothing advances in the House of Commons. I am of opinion that Gladstone, whatever the outlook for the party, should go to the country at once. I should, in that event, not be astonished at an increase of the Liberal majority. The feeling of disgust at the ignoble action of the Conservatives against Bradlaugh and in badgering Gladstone is as general as it can be with so torpid a people. —My wife, Mariette and I were in town with friends the first week in March. Saw Mrs. Langtry in a play not possible with any public but the English. They swallowed it with relish: 'Ours.' The realism is such that in a hut on the heights before Sebastopol you jam your shoulders against the door to keep out the snowstorm, and yet you receive 3 ladies fresh from England without a spot of mud, snow, or wet on their skirts, and you give them lodging and provision. She is the ideal Shepherdess of the chromo-lithographs. She has to faint, and she takes three gaunt strides to fall on the ready knees of the dame prepared to receive her. She has to make love, and does it with all her arms and breasts. Very handsome — not a shade of mystery or variableness: the heroine for bold dragoons.—Saw Irving as Romeo. The Love Play ceases to present a sorrowful story, and becomes a pageant with a quaint figure ranting about.

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[1] 'English Men of Letters.'

I must come to a close. The doctor interdicts writing. I just manage to do my morning's work. Any little in addition nearly finishes me; for the seat of the malady is the pen. When I returned from London after a holiday I was getting better, and now am once more shaky, though improved by comparison with what I was. Give my love to the Governor and Olive. Mariette is delighted with her picture. A word from Venice would be welcome. —Yours ever affectionately, GEORGE MEREDITH.

Read 'Numa Roumestan,' if you can lay hand on it. I do not care for the other novels of Daudet, but this is a consummate piece of work.

To M. André Raffalovich.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *April* 8, 1882.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have been unable to write much. All my correspondence lies in abeyance. A friend would persuade me to go with him to Evian on the Lake of Geneva in August, and I may try the place for a few weeks, if I can put a finish to my present work. It is doubtful.

Your article on Louis Stevenson is a fair summary of him. Leslie Stephen comes down to me three or four times in the year, with other friends forming a body calling themselves 'The Sunday Tramps,' who escape from the dreary London Sabbath once a fortnight and take a walk of between 20 and 30 miles. When I was in health I was of the pedestrian party. Now I have to meet them on the hills half way from home, or less. They dine with me, and start for London at 10 P.M. They are men of distinction in science or Literature; tramping with them one has the world under review, as well as pretty scenery. Leslie is acknowledged captain of the band. I have a very warm regard for him. If you remember Vernon Whitford of the 'Egoist,' it is a sketch of L. Stephen, but merely a sketch, not doing him full justice, though the strokes within and without are correct.—I have just put down 'Numa Roumestan,' an admirable piece of writing. The pictures of Provence, and the men and women of Southern blood, are astonishingly vivid. I like no other of Daudet's novels. His 'Contes Choisis' are exquisite. He has real poetical quality.—Now I must come to an end.—Believe me, your most faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

To M. André Raffalovich.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 23, 1882.

My dear Sir,—Your article on Th. Carlyle's 'Reminiscences' was prompted, I think, rather by enthusiasm for the lady who stands close and in contrast with him than by an accurate knowledge of his works, nature and teaching. Our people over here have been equally unjust, with less excuse. You speak of vanity, as a charge against him. He has little, though he certainly does not err on the side of modesty:—he knew his powers. The harsh judgment he passed on the greater number of his contemporaries came from a very accurate perception of them, as they were perused by the intense light of the man's personal sincereness. He was one who stood constantly in the presence of those 'Eternal verities' of which he speaks. For the shallow men of mere literary aptitude he had perforce contempt. The spirit of the prophet was in him.—Between him and his wife the case is quite simple. She was a woman of peculiar conversational sprightliness, and such a woman longs for society. To him, bearing that fire of sincereness, as I have said, society was unendurable. All coming near him, except those who could bear the trial, were scorched, and he was as much hurt as they by the action rousing the flames in him. Moreover, like all truthful souls, he was an artist in his work. The efforts after verification of matters of fact, and to present things distinctly in language, were incessant; they cost him his health, swallowed up his leisure. Such a man could hardly be an agreeable husband for a woman of the liveliest vivacity. But that is not a reason for your passing condemnation on him. Study well his writings. I knew them both. She did me the honour to read my books, and make him listen to extracts, and he was good enough to repeat that 'the writer thereof was no fool'—high praise from him. They snapped at one another, and yet the basis of affection was mutually firm. She admired, he respected, and each knew the other to be honest. Only she needed for her mate one who was more a citizen of the world, and a woman of the placid disposition of Milton's Eve, framed by her master to be an honest labourer's cook and housekeeper, with a nervous system resembling a dumpling, would have been enough for him.—He was the greatest of the Britons of his time—and after the British fashion of not coming near perfection; Titanic, not Olympian: a heaver of rocks, not a shaper. But if he did no perfect work, he had lightning's power to strike out marvellous pictures and reach to the inmost of men with a phrase.

We have had Mr. Louis Stevenson in our Valley, staying with his wife and father and mother at the inn. He dined with me several evenings, and talked of you. We speculated on the impression produced by his costume de Bohème, which he seems to have adopted for good—an innocent eccentricity at any rate.

My thanks are due to you for your articles on my works.

Pardon me if I do not correspond regularly. I am compelled to shun writing as much as possible, and scarcely hope to be of much use in the world until I have gone through some course of water-cure for unstrung nerves. They tell me that good douches are to be had at Evian, and I rather decide to go thither at the end of July, thence perhaps to the Engadine or the South Tyrol Dolomites, if my ancient talent for walking should be restored. You, who have youth, take my warning not to undermine it with the pick and blasting powder of pen and ink.—I am, with warmest greetings to you, your most faithful and obliged, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Dr. Jessopp.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 26, 1882.

My dear Jessopp,—I fear I am in disgrace with you. You fled from Norwich without note of address ; and it would seem that I am never to see you here.—I should have written, but have been very ill, the nerves prostrate. I think I am recovering, at the cost of abstention from work.—Recently I proposed a book for a publishing firm to undertake, and they regard it favourably. I have thought that you might not be unwilling to do it :—you would certainly do it well. It would consist of an Introductory Essay to a selection of extracts from Old English Preachers, and the title of it would stand as—' Wit, Wisdom, and Eloquence of English Divines '—the first series including South, Fuller, Donne, etc. South is really witty, and furnishes excellent specimens.

I have mentioned your name to the Publishers, and they will be willing to treat with you, if you smile on the notion.

Let me hear from you, and I will put you in communication with them.—Ever faithful at heart to you,

George Meredith.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *July* 25, 1882.

My dear Morley,—Do your friend this favour.—I have written my Will. You care for my children, and therefore I beg you to accept the post of executor, in conjunction with my wife's brother, Justin Vulliamy. John Deverell has drawn the Will. He finds it equitable to all having claims on me. No trouble will ensue, for all is plain, and the investments directed do not involve liabilities.—Your affectionate George Meredith.

I saw Holzmann[1] last Saturday. He says that Rosenheim is beautiful, but much too enclosed to suit his taste ; he prefers Mürren.—He goes to Evolena, and purposes to make the ascent of the Dent Blanche and the Matterhorn.

To Leslie Stephen.

Chez M. Edouard Vulliamy à Montigny,
par Tillières (Eure), France,
Sept. 18, 1882.

My dear Stephen,—The date of your letter tells me that you are likely to be in your London home by this time. I have just returned from North Italy and deluge, more days of rain than shine at Evian on Lake Leman ; a fine passage of the Simplon, and across the Maggiore to Lugano, where I beheld the Generoso capped, and heard of one hundred parsons and members of our Parliament holding forth to one another in a contest of the secular and sacred tongue, to keep up their spirits under the curse of rain, cold and darkness. So my son Arthur and I stopped behind at Rovio, till the cloud descended, drenched us and drove us to Milan. He has found a pleasant summer retreat from Rome at Sarnico, on the Lago d'Iseo, in Bergamasc region, and I thought of going on thither, but the Gods were too watery. I returned by the Riviera. The Mediterranean, of a leaden North Sea colour, dashed spray over our railway carriage. I scarcely envied Arthur his boasted Sarnico after we parted. He had a splendid three months in the Dolomites, including a successful ascent of the Marmeluda, with one Wickham of Oxford ; a third, Smith, lost his nerve on the snow, and was conducted backward to safe footing, and found in the afternoon with fish in his basket. You know the kind of man and his comments on the bruised shins of the two that had kissed the heights. —Here it is rain again, tempting one to rebuke almost impiously the Gulliver above. It is desired and hoped by the Box Hill family that the Captain of Tramps will bring his troop to us at the end of October, or in the first week in November, to see the red and yellow of the leaf in the valley. Please bear our wishes in mind. —Now concerning your dilemma, your kindness was the source of it, and it must now be over. When I have done the work I will hand it to you and await your opportunity, supposing you judge it to be fitting. I begin rather to feel that I shall write when I try—that is, in a manner to please myself, which has not been in my power for several months of late, though curiously I found no difficulty in verse. I am a bit stronger, less nerve-shaken after holding the pen in earnest for a couple of hours. If things go well I shall have the story ready by the Spring, but I dare not forecast very hopefully.—My 'Pall Mall' coming to Evian contained an article on your Cornish rocks and the Mosel spiked by them, clearly traceable to the Philosopher. I read it, looking at the Mountain over Montreux. —I was amused in Italy by the malevolence before Sir Garnet's great stroke, and the fury of jealousy, following a spasm of amazement, after it. But the letters to the 'Times' took the Italians too seriously. In a French paper they were compared to a lady who reproached Providence for the final blow of bad luck when an acquaintance gained a prize in a lottery, for which she had not taken a single ticket. On the whole the estimate of England's material greatness has risen, and if to that we add a moral pre-eminence we shall have gone an inch forward in helping to civilize the world. But if, on the other hand—Let it not be thought of!—It must now be shown that we are not a drunken people—rather the one nation which is not drunk after success.—I long to see you. Give my compliments and respects to your wife, and a tender word to such of the children as may know of me.—Yours very warmly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Mauritz Holzmann came to England in attendance upon Princess Alexandra on her marriage with the Prince of Wales. He held the post of private secretary to Her Royal Highness, and subsequently became chancellor of the Duchy of Cornwall.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, *Nov.* 10, 1882.

MY DEAR FRED,—Ivor has excellent sense, a compact square head, and good feeling. Therefore one may have the best hopes of him. I wish I had been with him more.

The Avalon douches have been of infinite benefit to me. I wish I could have one per diem at this place.—There is a small matter of business I had to speak with you upon, but, unless you play me false, you will be at Effingham and walking over to me about the 20th, which will neighbour my term of competency, long delayed.—Of course on Wednesday last I was engaged and had to lead all the old women of Eastbourne to the Supper table. I was indemnified by a pleasant chat with the fair (Mrs.) C——, who is conversable, fond of poetry, related to Dobell, knows the Riviera, intimate friend of Mrs. Craik, loves music, likes Rubinstein's playing, thinks Dobell too soon forgotten by ungrateful public, etc. etc. There, Fred! so much to start you. She has a pretty manner.

Give my warmest regards to the Governor.

Wise will be very welcome here when he is on the heights.—Yours ever warmly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

Box Hill, *March* 5, 1883.

My dear Fred,—Enclosed is Ivor's letter. I have been very glad to see an account of him in his hand. His life in his present quarters threatens him with dulness, but he is a fellow to cut his way clearly, even through that.—Morley tells me of your having the wires ready at Newcastle Polling-booths to convey information of the result of the Election to the Riviera. I have not exulted so much for years. Cowen's attitude and the swaying of the Irish vote alarmed me. But on the whole it seems that the Irish vote was not altogether unworthily given, and M. is indisposed to blame. An Irish solicitor, a Nationalist, opponent of the Government—any English Government—travelled from Dublin to Newcastle purposely to whip his countrymen to the post in support of M. The language of the 'Pall Mall' is of the kind to touch and make them stick. The other papers daily lacerate and widen the division. Forster is a concentration of English blundering in these relations.—I confess with shame that I am at work correcting preparatory to bringing out a volume of poems. When this is done I may want to fly, so keep me informed of your movements, if you make any, as I may be borne your way. I should like to run to Florence. Probably it is another of my airy dreams. Truly the passion to produce verse in our region is accursed. I ask myself why I should labour, and for the third time, pay to publish the result, with a certainty of being yelled at, and haply spat upon, for my pains. And still I do it. At heart, it is plain, I must have a remainder of esteem for our public; or I have now the habit of composition, which precipitates to publishing. I scorn myself for my folly. Where he can get no audience a spouting Homer would merit the Cap and Bells.—Give my love to Olive. I trust she will make a firm advance. My wife's sister-in-law, Madame Justin Vulliamy, at the villa of her mother Mdm. Labouchere, gives a better account of the weather than you, and tangible proofs of the sunniness in boxes of flowers.—Your ever warmly GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, *April* 13, 1883.

DEAR FRED,—The tramps take the line of Chertsey, Ripley, East Horsley, and either the Sheepleas or Effingham to Ranmore. I shall be on Ranmore road between 4½ and 5½ P.M. Hope to encounter you. They are, with their Captain, Pollock, Ed. Gurney, Sully, some of Fitzjames Stephen's sons.—Yours with all my heart,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, *April* 29, (1883 ?).

DEAR FRED,—The enclosed from Cardwell in Paris gives one as it were the yell of demons at humanity.

You time your visits cunningly to evade me.

I am in the distressing season of the correction of proofs and cursing of printers.

There was real spiritual grandeur in Gladstone's speech. But it will not move the English, who will bawl of it exultingly after his death, when they fancy it casts a beam of splendour upon them. Decade doses of the same are required for such blocks to be worn by it. The Government will be defeated. No one gets up in the House to say, that the majority of Petitions against comes of the active shepherding of an organised Clergy, ever sworn to support impediments.—I have not a soul to talk to but you in the neighbourhood, and when you are here you flit impishly.—Your nevertheless

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

Box Hill, *May* 1, 1883.

My dear Fred,—Madame Edouard Vulliamy leaves us on Friday. On the other day you name the party are engaged—to I know not what. They express extreme regrets.

If this weather should last I mean to propose a stroll with you among nightingales. We ought to have a day. Morley throws up the Pall Mall. It will be good for him, though he may miss the assistance it gave. But it bled him too constantly. Morison wrote the other day that he was looking fagged. I hear he is impressed for Committee work, and that is fatiguing enough in itself.—But his withdrawal is likely to be the death of the paper:—which will meander to extinction through the flats of tepid Liberalism.—Your loving George Meredith.

To Arthur G. Meredith.

Box Hill, Dorking,
England, *May* 5, 1883.

My dear Arthur,—The enclosed cheque from the 'Pall Mall' must be sent to you, as it has to be endorsed before you pay it into your bankers. Also you will find a bit of Italian paper money, which is yours by right of conquest, for it is owing to your dexterous ingenuity that I find it in my possession. When I discovered it, a burst of admiration rendered tribute to Hermes. Your account of Sicily bowls me over, still I would swear there are spots of enchantment in the island. Surely Theocritus was a trusty singer. Your bad luck in weather must have saddled your nose with fog-spectacles.—I fancy it is the article on Rabelais where Littré speaks of the superior suppleness of the Latin-descended languages. Of course I shall be glad when you are able to set to work, but I see the vastness of the project and hope you will not tax your strength till you feel that thirst for composition which is a guarantee of fitness. As far as I see of your scheme I agree with it, and there is a strong support to it in the general rule of English verse, which is forced, in dealing with Nature, to lean on the simple natural words most imagerially expressive. Our Latin and Norman French are rejected in the tongue of emotion—except by those who know not how to use it ; and these are sure to be frigid or preposterous.—I write hurriedly again, that I may make sure of getting the enclosed to you before you start. Send me speedy news of your whereabout. I suppose you intend to fix in Sunland. If, however, you can bear well so bad a winter as you have had, I think some spot in North Italy might suit you. There are warm corners even in Switzerland. But in Italy the Summer comes earlier. I am just bringing out a volume of verse—no testimony to my wisdom. Where to go this year I do not know ; perhaps nowhere. My last year's experience uncharmed me. I am, however, now stronger for walking—though not up to my old mark.—I have no domestic news. The children were delighted to hear of you, and your so well weathering your trials of the winter. —Your loving father, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, *June* 16, 1883.

MY DEAR FRED,—The Proofs have not been examined owing to pressure of work after leaving Effingham. Telegraph if you want them sent anywhere. I think it better to keep them and finish, unless I hear that you want them in their untouched state. But in truth what ought to be done is for us two to sit together for a couple of days and settle them to common satisfaction.—I have been in London—to bad French Play, 'Roman Parisien,' Nothing could be worse; and the acting, with the exception of St. Germain, poor. Also to the Danischeffs—in English. Stuff—froth of small beer presented as vinous. Saw H——. He sees Revolution; fears the forces are not sufficiently hot to make it quite close on . . . The idea strikes me that he is aiming himself at Martyrdom and a grand scene.—I hope you are to get benefit of the Carlsbad Waters, and shall be very glad to have you back.—I am informed that my little book[1] is moving, yet expect a constricted bulk to be soon bellowing to me from stagnation that I was once more a fool to publish verse. Drop a line from your Baths.—Your affectionate GEORGE M.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, DORKING,
ENGLAND, *July* 15, 1883.

MY DEAR FRED,—I am tardy in my reply owing to various causes, one being that I have not sat still, except to do a bit of hasty work under compulsion, since you left. I am doubtful of Carlsbad for my case. The change would be good, and fellowship with you. But I dread the long journey, and believe besides that bracing air is my specific. I get some benefit from a recently imposed milk and fruit diet, meat and wine temporarily abjured. . . . Morley speaks of going to Homburg, Switzerland, and Scotland, also Devonshire—which generally results in Margate, as he ruefully admits. If Scotland, he would bind me by oath to visit him. Morison would have me try three weeks at Ben Rhydding. Such a scheme presents no idea of holiday to me, yet I think the Water system in a keen air would animate this frame. Your doctor's report of you strikes me as acute and reasonable, and it hits me in a direct line: only I don't see how Carlsbad waters would avail to string the muscular or nervous relaxment.

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[1] *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth.*

I have not been able to get to Effingham, as I wished. To-morrow, I suppose, your mother starts for Buxton. Leo came down to us for some tennis at a neighbour's, and very prettily he plays. We wonder that he oozed out of the Lawn Tennis Championship match. He was paired with an adversary, but proved elusive. In your next letter let me hear what you are likely to do after leaving Carlsbad; I don't think I can meet you on the Continent. I am quite uncertain of my movements. Unfortunately I do not find myself in the humour for composition, and must therefore go somewhere—Yorkshire or Scotland seems the likeliest, little attractive. Tyrol would please me most if it were but closer! I have no news for you. I met Dilke and Jebb at a roaring gabble-gobble at Morison's last week, a dinner of sixteen, and it was full half an hour before my ears could distinguish an articulation at the table. Nothing spoken worth remembering. On Friday my good Fairy took me to hear the tortuous Sarah Bernhardt in Fedora, a detestable play, written expressly to bring out some of her arts. She has taken flesh of late; was admirable, by comparison, of course, but monotonous. On Monday I have to go and see Wagner's 'Fliegender Holländer' at the Opera; next day to meet Browning by his wish at dinner, and then I hope my London excursions will have ceased. To-day there is North in the air, and I am held together. I await further accounts of your 'Cure.' I hope it may come under that title.—Written in haste, while a friend stamps his feet for a Sunday morning's walk.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

Box Hill, England, *July* 20, 1883.

My dear Fred,—The reports of your good condition under Carlsbad treatment are most refreshing. I heard of you last Friday at the Opera from Mrs. Duff, who was there with her daughter—growing pretty, and her husband. Opera 'Der Fliegende Holländer,' Albani as heroine excellent: all the rest, including chorus, execrable. I have wished but not been able to go to Effingham, and now your mother is at Buxton. I fancy I shall remain fixed here. The French are in a beastly temper with us, and the weather is uncertain, and I require to be shovelled into movement. The article on Carlsbad in 'Harper' (my thanks for it) would not send me there save with or to find my friend. The horror of entering after your departure would be poison.—Nothing yet done about poor Foote. I wish to send him my last vol. of verse, but fancy it would not be handed. By the way, Macmillan is printing it again, at his cost, in disgust of the slipshod style of the first issue.—Met Morley, who looks fit for action. Greenwood (you doubtless are seeing) is bull-dogging France, which country is not behaving brilliantly, but the Tory policy is to seem to the nation leaning on the stronger Bismarck. Surely party Government is destined to ruin a land. I have no news, and write merely to salute you and tell you how glad I shall be to see you back—I hope permanently benefited.—Your ever loving George Meredith.

To Admiral Maxse.

Box Hill, *August* 16, 1883.

My dear Fred,—I propose to come to you on Monday next. Our Will pays his fortnightly visit to us on Saturday, and I don't like to miss him. My train should land me in Eastbourne at some hour of the afternoon—I think about 4 P.M.—but be independent of me. If I do not find you at home I shall march to the Parade.—Your offer to take me in refreshes me, for I am stagnant and can't write. I have an invitation to Sutherlandshire, but should require a policeman to transport me. The Continent is not attractive. Beechy Head seems to present the virtues of a plain but fortifying spouse, after the dazzling harlotry have burnt to the wick—honest prose instead of pretentious verse. By the way, Burney Yeo has quarter in Eastbourne. I am anxious to have my hopes confirmed, that you are permanently the better for Carlsbad.—Ever warmly yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, *Sept.* 13, 1883.

MY DEAR FRED,—You must have anticipated the answer to your last telegram, but it was as well to make the trial, however hopelessly. You know my feeling about sentimentalists. If I did not take them for subjects of study, they would enrage me past any tolerance; and as it is, I find the prompting to fling too heavy a word at them hard to restrain. The Tempter of mankind has never such a grin as when he sees them mix the true and the false.—For him who has gone, all is over, but he lives with me and with you in his unmatched, most generous nature. Of the existence of melancholy spirits I have no belief, and none in those who return to Earth.

To Frederick Greenwood.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Sept.* 17, 1883.

MY DEAR GREENWOOD,—I send you a short article of my son Arthur's, on the Bergamese Alps, a country he is inhabiting and knows well. It is deficient in our modern touches of picturesqueness, but it is honest, and takes the survey of a rather unknown region on a large scale. If it should not suit, I would beg to have the MS. preserved. Here is matter that may interest you. On certain points political and social you and I differ up to musket-muzzles; on some we are (and I will call you captain) in a marching column. You have taken a statesman's view of the Contagious Diseases Act—and the suspension of it. Well, t'other day Maxse went down to Plymouth, as you know. To his astonishment, he there found that all the experience of the town made the electors—even the Nonconformists, formerly inveterate against—favourable to the Act. And for the most moral of reasons; not simply that it is proved to keep the men healthy, but that the women when in hospital, are attended by ministering ladies (who can get at them nowhere else, or under such conditions for moving them), and in cases numberless, these poor girls have been rescued, plucked away from that devil's road of prostitution. I think this noteworthy enough to communicate it to you, though the chances may be that you have heard of it.

Adieu. Remember me to that brave daughter of yours, and believe me ever your affectionate,

George Meredith.

To J. B. Douglas.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Sept.* 17, 1883.

Dear Sir,—Your letter is one of the pleasures a writer meets with at intervals. Excepting some tales in magazines, your list of my published works is complete. I wish I could help you to obtain the copies you are anxious to possess. I have neither the 1st vol. of Poems nor

'Rh. Fleming.' If you have not seen the books, I would beg you to take my judgment upon them, that they are not worth reading.—Believe me, very faithfully yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, 1883.

MY DEAR FRED,—Of course the infernal error is the binder's. I do not imagine it to be in other than the copy of the reviewer.

It would refresh me soul and body to come to you, and dine and sleep, according to my lady's kind invitation. But the deuce is after me to make me finish my work—on my shoulders by day, my breast by night. I cannot spare the time. I should like to come if it were only to see your mother. Added to that, the rare opportunity of seeing you would naturally attract me. You understand how I am circumstanced. I get so small a sum of money for my work that I am always in harness, always jogging for a shilling, and to be let loose in a paddock for an hour is a thing unknown to me. And so on till I drop, I suppose.—Can you not give me an hour in the afternoon on Monday ?—Moreover I am ignorant of your permanent address : let me have the most stationary one at least. I want to hear of Guernsey and Hugo.

Present my compliments and respects to my lady.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Miss Wilson.[1]

BOX HILL, *Oct.* 11, 1883.

MOST DEAR JULIA,—The love you sent with the cigarette-case gave a spirit to the present. I never looked on my initials with so much pleasure before.—And your thinking of me is the more touching when I think of you bound for the Soudan, to convert and espouse the Mahdi, or at least make of him the Chief of the Julians. My wife convulses me by singing a kind of rustic version of the story in anticipation:

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[1] Elder daughter of Christopher Wilson of High Ashurst, Surrey, and Charles Street, Berkeley Square—now Lady Inglefield.

The Mahdi, the Mahdi!
Please to remember the Mahdi!
He's a total opaque, but I'm sure, for my sake
You'll have a kind word for the Mahdi!

And then she begins Offenbaching with souvenirs of the Grande Duchesse:—You are supposed to have brought the illustrious Black Gentleman to your father:—

Voici le Mahdi, le Mahdi, le Mahdi,
Voici le Mahdi, le Mahdi, O mon père!

And I am led to suppose you have acted it in advance. But such things have led to earnest; and I should relish the idea as little as your amazed and indignant père. Only we all say that it is in your nature to aim and strike at the remotest game. For the present the Mahdi seems the natural point to you. Whatever happens, I beg you to endeavour to return to us in the Spring and be sunlight to your English Julians. I wish you and all the happiest of voyages, and am ever your devoted

George Meredith.

To J. E. H. Gordon.

Box Hill, *Oct.* 26, 1883.

My dear Jim,—Greenwood gave me the promise.[1] I suppose that a new Literary editor opening the book must have recoiled at the aspect of the hieroglyphic pages. I can perceive my own affright at being expected to say a candid word of the contents. I will take the first opportunity of speaking to him—writing further would but worry: but I anticipate that he will say he has no one on his staff to master a scientific book:—popular, though you may call it. But cabalistically popular, we think it, who have hardly pushed a nose, and hastily withdrawn from that chamber of the arcana of figures. . . .

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[1] The review of a volume by James Clerk-Maxwell.

I grieved to miss that breakfast with you, your wife and Butcher.[1] Now do think of appointing another day when you can join the hand and dine and sleep here. I breakfast (alone) by new Doctor's rules—and very effective they are—at eleven—then fast till seven.

We will bed Butcher at the Burford—and a jolly evening!! I am again in good vein for work—but physically dependent on bracing weather. My love to your wife.—Yours ever warmly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To James Cotter Morison.

BOX HILL, *Oct.* 30, 1883.

DEAREST ST. B.,—Your letter is laden with joy for your friend. I have been hearing from Will of your radiant overflowingness: from Burney Yeo, that he was to meet you; and I was disgusted with Lowry[2] for overlooking me—not that I should have accepted, but the offer of the chance would have nourished imagination of the pleasure.—I suppose you plead for Guido Fawkes publicly somewhere on the 5th November. Come, then, to me the day following, and not a day later. Let me know the hour of your train, and you shall be met.

Give my love to Mrs. Singleton. I have been anxious about her state. Will's order for apples was very welcome, as a promise of her improvement.

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[1] J. G. Butcher—later K.C. and M.P. for York City.

[2] Lowry Whittle.

As for me, Burney Yeo is positive as to the spinal chord as the seat of the malady. I am queerish at times, ill-balanced over the common pit, but working at a splendid pace. Ever since I took to your prescription in diet—from the first day miraculously—I sprang to the pen, and am producing rapidly. But I can't walk much. A mile beyond the right distance cripples me. And as soon as I feel better I fall in the old ways and am lamed again. That I can work, is the point. Tuesday next! I kiss the girls, and am ever your loving

George Meredith.

To F. H. Evans.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Nov.* 16, 1883.

Dear Sir,—I have been away from home and under a heavy burden of work on my return. Let this be my excuse for not having instantly replied to your letter. Were I sensitive to public neglect, in the degree supposed of me by your friend, such a letter, be assured, would perfectly console me. I have from time to time received communications of a similar kind, but not one that has touched me so warmly: and this by no means because of the flattering length and the eulogies, but that the quotations you make prove you to have felt the spirit of the matter. The line on 'Prayer,' for example. No one has ever noticed it to me before: and I know it to be a vital line. I know therefore that you have done me the honour to read my work thoughtfully and with open conscience, of which I am cordially glad to think. You help me to work on.

As to the 'neglect of the public,' I have never felt that I was running a race for its favour, and when I wrote to your friend Mr. Clark, telling him of the effect on me of the public indifference to my works, it was a simple statement of the fact of my reflected indifference. The art of writing novels is to present a picture of life, but novel-writing embraces only a narrow portion of life. I trust that I keep my eyes on the larger outlook, as little as possible on myself. In conclusion, it will always be a lively encouragement to me to feel that I am writing for men like you and your friend.—I am, your most faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

Lady Caroline Maxse.

BOX HILL, *Dec.* 1, 1883.

DEAR LADY CAROLINE,—The birds are very acceptable; and the second brace makes our larder rich as a game-preserver's—richer, I think, when I consider how you denude your own to supply the neighbour.

I have been intending to write to you, and but for my present hot fit of composition, should have done so, on the receipt of the Admiral's Address to his Plymouth Brethren. It is in all respects, to my idea, admirable; a rightly clear, manful, straight and luminous political outline. I have seen nothing to surpass, few deliveries to equal it.—I have forwarded my copy of the paper to General Fremantle, whose mind (Tory, doubtless) I excited on the subject. But how strange to reflect that Fred's politics, taken for ultra-Radical at Southampton, are, ten years or so later, almost part of a general programme, to which in some degree the Tories are by compulsion affecting to concede.—I hope you are well, and am ever your devoted GEORGE MEREDITH.

To M. André Raffalovich.

BOX HILL, *Jan.* 16, 1884.

MY DEAR M. ANDRÉ,—I have the assurance that when I tell you I am at the galley-oar of work, you will pardon my delay in replying to your very welcome letter. My wife contrasts your finer French manners with my boorish. I tell her that you prefer at heart the English pattern. She says it should not be warrant for discourtesy. I plead that you never will so construe it. Upon which I am asked whether it is well to be at the mercy of a generous interpretation—nay, to demand it! I really have no answer, except that I am a galley-slave and somewhat sick.—I shall (since you have resolved to publish) be glad to see your book. To me it is a lasting amazement that any one should wish to put forth books—and books of verse!—in England, who is not under pressure of circumstances. A collection of your French prose articles I think I would rather see. But I am speaking in the dark.

My present novel is for the 'Fortnightly,' and it begins in March or April. It is partly based on a real instance; if my health holds out I shall have done my part of the task with the publication of the first number.

I beg you to present my compliments and respects to M. and Mdme. Raffalovich. If your mother has not read Herbert Spencer's article in the last 19th Century Magazine—'Religion: A Retrospect and Prospect,' pray, let me hear from Paris and I will do myself the honour to forward it. Adieu. I shall hope to see you, in some way when you return.—Yours ever faithfully and warmly,
George Meredith.

To Mrs. George Meredith.

Box Hill, *Feb.* 15, 1884.

Dearest Marie,—Your Forsaken Husband, in looking at the topless tree of our garden, compares himself therewith, though he does not dare name it the Silver Fir, lest you should be set swearing aloud that never did he bear any resemblance to the currency. Your card was welcome. I shall look for a report of the 'Flat.' 'Diana' rather in the Doldrums.

To-day a brisker air, but last night was breathless.—I rejoiced to think that it was favourable for London.

There is a card from Miss M——, saying nothing, but curious as a literal transcript of the gaping of joint eyes and mouth!

Give a cripple's love to Aunt Mary Anne. I am sure you will have remembered me to Mrs. Blackwell.

Enclosed is A. and N. ticket in case of your needing it. I trust with all my heart that you and the blessed Riette will have a right joyful holiday.—Yours with full affection,

George M.

To Admiral Maxse.

Box Hill, *Feb.* 18, 1884.

My dearest Fred,—I wish I could come. My health is so queer that I never move but from compulsion. I am besides heavily weighted with work, and must get as near to the close of a Novel[1] for the 'Fortnightly,' that appears in April or May, as I can. Otherwise I could almost have applied to you for an invitation to meet Clémenceau. He is the one prominent political Frenchman of these days whom I respect and esteem mentally, morally and cordially:—a Frenchman and more. Of how few that we admire can we say it! Most of them, noble fellows though they are, beat about as hard bound in their French blood as an inland sea. Hugo, for an example.—I hope you will tell M. Clémenceau that I regret with all my heart the state of health and occupation which withholds from me the honour of making my bow to him. . . .—Your loving George Meredith.

Did you read the 'Conservative' in Saturday's 'Pall Mall'?—who 'cannot' see that we have ever derived profit from our intercourse with France. It is the slow English way of answering French journalistic diatribes!

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[1] *Diana of the Crossways.*

To M. André Raffalovich.

Box Hill, *March* 5, 1884.

My dear M. André,—I wish very much that I had time at my disposal to write to you fully of your little volume, as it deserves. My astonishment has been great at your singular, and melodious, mastery of our versification; and also, let me add critically, at the amazing, though rare, lapses here and there, where from your earlier habit of counting by syllables instead of by the accent, you drop half a foot, or throw a stress on a particle unable to sustain it. I wonder, you see, because of your general and evidently easy triumph:—as though a gala coat should present an astounding patch.

How do you scan:—

'Love whispered, and I who heard not knew not' when the rhyme is the last single syllable? Your verse insists on shortening 'whŏ hĕard nōt.' Even for that, you should have put 'Love whisperèd.'

But the instances are rare. The 'Story of a Love,' with its adept recurrent stroke on the initial syllable, is as good as anything of our best lyrists.

> 'All in one the hunted host
> Was I, and the Hunter's boast,'
> etc. etc.

A perfect stanza, and one of many.—The Terza rima of 'A Child's Vision' is finely wrought to convey a beautiful poetic idea.

Perhaps on the whole I like best your sonnets. You have deeply studied Shakespeare's. You have drunk of Milton. The first two lines of 'Health and Romance' have his full-mouthed clarion tone. 'In Paradise' charms me—save for the skip in the 12th line. 'Love's Secresy' is pure Shakespearian in style and turn of thought. XXXII. is perfectly rendered.—I do not stop for lack of numbers to name in praise. When next I have the pleasure of seeing you, the volume, if your modesty consents, shall be our harp of talk and song.—Believe me ever, very warmly yours,

George Meredith.

To R. L. Stevenson.

Box Hill, *March* 24, 1884.

My dear Stevenson,—Nothing so pleasant can come to me as your good word of any of my writings—if I except the news of your reviving strength: and on that head I want more. I heard in the papers of your recovery from an illness unknown to me. Are you now much better? All our household inquires very anxiously: my wife, Mariette and Will, and all send their love to you with warmth. Mine I trust you know of. In the winter I read 'Treasure Island,' the best of boys' books, and a book to make one a boy again, without critical reserve as to the quality of the composition. The Buccaneers are real bloody rascals, no sham of it.—I wish I could come to you. I have developed a spinal malady and can walk not much more than a mile. On the other hand I can work passably well, and am just finishing at a great pace a two-volume novel, to be called 'Diana of the Crossways'—partly modelled upon Mrs. Norton. But this is between ourselves. I have had to endow her with brains and make them evidence to the discerning. I think she lives. She appears by instalments in the 'Fortnightly Review,' commencing May or June. I hope to have done with her—have her out of me—in April. Then if I were well enough I think I would fly to the Riviera. I have no such sweet prospect. I am a cripple.

All this winter we have had a Riviera temperature: and to me in need of bracing it has been a scourge.—On Sunday the tramps come to us, Leslie Stephen, Fred Pollock, and others not named yet. I should venture to give them hopeful news of you: but pray confirm it. I shall await a letter from you anxiously. Should you be too busy to write instantly—often the case with me—confide the task to Mrs. Louis, to whom I and we all send respectful and amicable greetings. Have you met Edmond Sartoris of Hyères? He is building a house there: a man with steadfast good stuff in him. Adieu, my dearest fellow, and know me always warmly your friend, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Leslie Stephen.

BOX HILL, *March* 24, 1884.

DEAR MRS. LESLIE,—Your wedded philosopher (if such thing there be, and pray pose him with the question) will tell you that facts do not always testify to facts, and least of all the concrete for witness of the moral. I am always wishing to come, I have often to decline your charitable invitation. I am now writing daily very hard, and though the work flows to its end in full view, my health at present is of a kind hardly to bear the strain. If I come to London I lose the next morning for work; I am besides but a tottering dummy at the festal board. It would have been a great pleasure to meet Mr. Lowell,[1] whom I love. But you will have him and be fully blest.

Meanwhile I hope to finish with the delivery of the terrible woman afflicting me (a positive heroine with brains, with real blood, and demanding utterance of the former, tender direction of the latter) by the end of April; and then I will venture to offer myself for an afternoon when I can see the whole family; say, an hour.—Request, I beg, the Captain of Tramps to inform me of his numbers and route on Sunday next: and bid him arrive by half-past five, that the thirsty troop may be refreshed by Russian tea, and not to have to drink tumblers of water at dinner, as I saw them doing on their last visit. I trust the children are well, and am your most faithful

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[1] James Russell Lowell.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Leslie Stephen.

BOX HILL, *May* 19, 1884.

DEAR MRS. LESLIE,—I have by an old engagement to go to Mr. Morison on the 21st, and I doubt of my being released on the day following. If in town I will venture to present myself at your hour of meeting in the middle of the day, for I greatly wish to see, on the chance of hearing, the fair Fiddler.

'Diana of the Crossways' keeps me still on her sad last way to wedlock. I could have killed her merrily, with my compliments to the public; and that was my intention. But the marrying of her, sets me traversing feminine labyrinths, and you know that the why of it never can be accounted for. I shall be free certainly after the first week in June; and then I believe I visit Lady Lawrence at Prince's Gate, when I may hope to see you and your ambiguous lord and the children.—I am, most faithfully yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. J. E. H. Gordon.

BOX HILL, *May* 19, 1884.

DEAR MRS. JIM,—I burn to come to you, but my work won't reel off before the middle of June. I have had to refuse Lady Lawrence and the ladies of Whitehall,[1] Mrs.

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[1] Miss Louisa and Miss Mary Lawrence.

Eustace Smith and many others, who wish in kindness to furnish entertainment to the rustic. An old engagement tears me woefully from the closing of my work to Hampstead for a night on the 21st. Then I return to complete the task, and am free, and I will then take my chance of your being also to receive me. Give my love to Jim, and believe me ever, your most faithful

George Meredith.

To W. E. Henley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *June* 24, 1884.

Dear Mr. Henley,—I will certainly come if I can. Any work of Louis Stevenson's or yours will be sure to interest me. The doubt is owing to the serious illness of my wife.[1] The crisis is over, but she is lying at a friend's house under the Doctor's hands in town, and I give her all my spare hours, now that I have no longer to be in constant attendance. 'Deacon Brodie' has a sound of success in the title. I should like to help the launch and will try.—Believe me, most truly yours,

George Meredith.

To Miss Marie Meredith.

Box Hill, *July* 7, 1884.

My own Dearie,—I have a telegram from Lady Lawrence, inviting me to go to Prince's Gate, and stay as long as I like, to-morrow. So I go, but cannot stay more than two days. I shall take up your flowers to A——
—the best we can find, jolly Dandelions, horse Daisies, double Marigolds—things he can wear with pride in Piccadilly. Mama seems going on pretty well. Papa still suffers from the persecution of invitations to dinner,

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[1] In June 1884 Mrs. Meredith underwent a severe operation in London.

which is becoming intense; mixed with summonses to be a Vice-President of strange Societies. His three bags are in perpetual motion, and we know but the name of home. As for work, it is treated as the whiff of a cigar. No sooner do I take pen in hand than a telegram arrives, Bags are packed, Cole shoulders them, Ampleford nips ticket, and away I fly, after supposing myself settled yesterday. Will left this morning. God bless my dearie. I pray for constant good news of her. Love to the Aunts and cousins, from my dear Girl's Papa,

George Meredith.

To William Hardman.

Box Hill, *July* 15, 1884.

My dearest Tuck,—I have been postponing to write with the intention of sending a long letter of thanks and comments on your capital book,[1] which well describes the country, and is consummate in the art of painting the author—but piles of work have caused me to postpone, and I send hastily now to save myself from being thought churlish.

I read the book at a sitting, saw you and Demi Troïa throughout, shared your enjoyment, had an impish relish of your discomforts, felt the scenery, hung in trembling fear that at some stage of the journey you would have to mount a horse, rejoiced that the fatal beast was avoided. God bless you. I had hoped to ask you to come to me for a Saturday, but Marie has been ill. She is recovering, and goes to Eastbourne I think at the end of the week. My love to D. T. and the young ladies.—Ever your friendliest George Meredith.

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[1] *A Trip to America*, by William Hardman.

To Mrs. Leslie Stephen.

Box Hill, Dorking, *August* 23, 1884.

Dear Mrs. Leslie,—Your letter of inquiry gave the invalid great pleasure, as it is a woman, that leaps to be thought of. Nor has divine Philosophy yet raised even me to the Arctic stage of indifference, a point to which I steadily climb in spirit, dragged down now and again by some one remembering my name, who revives a personal throb or two. Eastbourne air was very serviceable. To-day we drove to Leith Hill. Generally my wife is regaining her strength, though slowly. She lives on fruit, and there is plenty in the present season. I live on hope; a condition resembling a midway station across the abyss, and depending on the winds as well as power of heart; for now that she has failed, my sense of stability takes wing. However, in footing the tight-rope, one must not look ahead—nor under—nor up; but steadily at the present support. Your philosopher will expound the state, and one that we started from, and are brought back to by the course of life, with just a little more knowledge of ourselves and half a yard around us. Tell him, I shall be glad when the tramps are gathered hither out of Europe and America. How much I should like to be with him, you and the children on your dazzling blue borders of sea,[1] and observe Thoby's first recreancy!—before his father has taught him that he must act the superior, and you have schooled the little maids to accept the fact supposed:—for it is largely (I expect you to dissent) a matter of training. Courage is proper to women, if it is trained, as with the infant man.—My 'Diana' still holds me; only by the last chapter; but the coupling of such a woman and her man is a delicate business. She has no puppet-pliancy. The truth being,

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[1] St. Ives, Cornwall.

that she is a mother of Experience, and gives that dreadful baby suck to brains. I have therefore a feeble hold of her; none of the novelist's winding-up arts avail; it is she who leads me. But my delay of the conclusion is owing to my inability to write of late.—I see that the Biographical Dictionary is advertised. I trust that the Master of the Cemetery for this Necrology is content with the Epitaphs on the tomb-stones; meekly forethoughtful that his 19th century estimates will have no readers but the moons of the 20th, and the moonstruck. What was thought of their lights by contemporaries, should be good literary burlesque. I regret as much as he that he is bound to such work, and wish he would vary it with some Cornish sketches and the colouring he excels in—touches upon stuff that lives.—We were promised Lowell here at Burford.[1] Morison I have not seen for long, but his girls are at Fellday, and we purpose to drive there. Adieu, dear Mrs. Leslie; with my love to your lord and all the young ones.
GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, *August* 31, 1884.

MY DEAR FRED,—I think that at this date last year I was with you in Avalon. I was next door to it last month with my wife four days, and had thoughts of the same complexion as yours, in the weighty part of your letter. For me, I would not have my life again—under the conditions: and also I should think it a vileness to crave for the happiest of renewed existences. The soul's one road is forward. Dreams of sensational desires drown it. But as to the soul, we get the conception of that, by contrast with the sensations. We go and are unmade. Could elective reason wish for the reconstruction? And yet it is quite certain that the best of us is in the state of survival. We live in what we have done—in the idea: which seems to me the parent fountain of life, as opposed to that of perishable blood. I see all round me how much Idea governs; and therein see the Creator; that other life to which we are drawn: not conscious, as our sensations demand, but possibly cognizant, as the brain may now sometimes, when the blood is not too forcefully pressing on it, dimly apprehend. Consciousness excites human felicity to kill it. Past consciousness, there may be a felicity eternal. These are not words, they are my excruciated thoughts—out of bloody sweat of mind, and now peaceful, imaging life, accepting whatever is there. Don't reject them hastily. —We will talk further.

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[1] The country house of Sir Trevor and Lady Lawrence.

Of course I am envious of your mountain flight. I trust you may have bright weather, but have to doubt. Here the S.W., with warm showers, is on us, and the baked are boiled. I read that rain is over Zermatt. Let me know when you are at Effingham, and of how you have been since leaving Carlsbad. I shall be glad of a day with you.—Ever your loving

George Meredith.

To Admiral Maxse.

Box Hill, *Jan.* 5, 1885.

My dear Fred,—I return you Mrs. Crawford's [1] letter. It touches one with envy of her husband, of his children, and of her friends.—I saw in Correspondence of the 'Daily News' a discernible outline of the Admiral dining at Clémenceau's.—From the Foreign point of view, our Government, in Foreign affairs, must appear a table of imbeciles. But Diplomacy that is not backed by force is a nerveless thing. Either we surrender our position universally, or we must have men in arms—soldiers as well as sailors. Nothing, I suppose, but war will push the English to this policy, so it seems that they will consent to sink, unless a fit of the old national pride precipitates them helplessly into the struggle. There is our present danger. Not less than an addition of 100,000 men to the army was needed when we set foot on Egypt.

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[1] Correspondent of the *Daily News* in Paris.

However, the eldest son of Albert Edward has attained his majority, and loyal columns of print fill the Liberal newspapers. We go down with our characteristics flying. I look forward to my visit to you in February.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Leslie Stephen.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Jan.* 28, 1885.

MY DEAR MRS. LESLIE,—Your lord, of Dictionary happily relieved, is probably breathing sea, so I write to you.—I was hoping to name a day for welcoming the Tramps, when my wife spoke to me. She has to go through another dread crisis—not so severe, but darker to my thoughts. Lady Lawrence has hired a lodgment for her in Montpelier Square. Subsequently she will remove to Prince's Gate, and there perhaps you would do her the kindness to visit her. Could you bring yourself to call at the former place, it would soothe her. Your very presence in a sick-chamber would be balm—to me at least. I have to be at Albert Hall Mansions on the 5th of next month, and will call on you that day or the next—about 5¼ P.M.—taking my chance. I stay subsequently with Admiral Maxse, Queen's Gate Terrace, or the Lawrences.

I hope to be able to return in ten days, time enough to arrange for the brotherhood. One of my wife's sisters will keep house with Mariette. Supposing things to go well, I will give the weaker Frati refreshment of Russian tea at the cottage. I wish it had space to enfold them for dinner. To pick from them on such an occasion would be invidious. I fancy the Burford Inn might spread a feast for 20. But I cannot speak conjecturally well of the kind of entertainment. I will see to the ordering. But of these things I will talk to you.—I am your most faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, *Jan.* 28, 1885.

MY DEAR FRED,—My wife has to be in town early next week, to pass through another crisis. I am bound, as it is her wish, to spend a night at Albert Hall Mansions, and will offer myself to you for three days from the 5th February, if you can take me in. I shall not be much of company, but your talk will relieve me. Be quite independent during my visit. The Lawrences of Prince's Gate and Whitehall Place have offered me a room: I can go there. Lady Lawrence has taken lodgings for the invalid in Montpelier Square. Subsequently she will go to Prince's Gate. She has a good nurse, a skilful surgeon, kind friends. One of her sisters looks after Mariette at the Cottage.

Very much with Wolseley and Stewart, but I despise the fretful anxieties of the Press.

If you are to be among the blown-up I will go with you.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To M. André Raffalovich.

BOX HILL, *Feb.* 23, 1885.

MY DEAR M. ANDRÉ,—I would have written instantly, but hesitated to disappoint you. I am indeed in a state unworthy of your hospitality and the society of the lovely and charming person you invite me to meet. I am physically tottering and deeply anxious. You will hold me excused, I am sure. I would come, without one of the fairest of the daughters of Venus to attract, had I the common stability of men at this moment.

Your little volume has arrived. I am pleased to read the dedication. I have but run through it yet. I see in one respect a distinct advance: also that it would be the duty of a friend to lecture you. This is your second volume, and it makes a big heap, and the ability, the ingenuity, and assiduity in collecting and assorting petals of flowers and films of fancy, astonish one. Yet the impression left is of pot pourri in an exquisite jar. At least, such is my first impression. By and by, I will, with your sanction, speak of it further. Set your mind on Earth and Life, the two perpetually intershuffling. Observe; write but to tear to strips, for a time. That is what I should say at present.

To Admiral Maxse.

Avalon House, Upperton,
Eastbourne, *April* 11, 1885.

Dearest Fred,—The doctor's report is not good. He sees counterbalancing symptoms: and these with the ground-malady at work beneath, perhaps causing them, make me hopeless. It is piteous to see her. She is very patient: no articulation yet. I leave for a couple of days at Box [Hill] on Saturday, and take advantage of your offer to have me here next week. She dreads (I perceive) the interview with her children. Once with me she burst into sobs, but the fit was over soon. She visibly commands herself and fills me with admiration of the resources of her nature—which, if I am to live, will be half my life.

Give my respects to my Lady. My love is with you wherever you are, and say tender things from me to Olive.—Yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To M. André Raffalovich.

BOX HILL, *April* 28, 1885.

MY DEAR M. ANDRÉ,—I am unable to come, and I regret it; still more the reason, as will you and Miss Gribbell. I have just left my wife lying seriously ill at Eastbourne. I have not heart to visit and dine. When I can leave my work I take the train to sit beside my sufferer. Will was there for a fortnight; Mariette is fixed there. I cannot yet forecast the chance of a removal to our cottage. At present the invalid is quite helpless. Let me beg you to make excuses to Mdlle. Sophie for the omission to thank her warmly and gratefully, as my wife would have done, in reply to her present of the welcome book—a monument of solid labour, speaking more of the power of her sex than loudest shrieks for the Suffrage. I beg that Miss Gribbell will accept my kindest compliments, and am your most faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, *April* 28, 1885.

MY DEAR FRED,—I left Avalon yesterday, your Violet decorating me with a buttonhole. My wife is faintly better, can move her arm. No speech yet; signs of internal hopelessness. And I have no hope. I live for the day, satisfied if I have no shattering news.

All our morning papers write as in a clamour of madness. I do fear that they influence the Ministry, though the latter seem wiser. But if they secure the state of Peace, you will have a good Liberal card at the elections when you point at the ravings of the Tory Press for War. I look at the telegrams each morning with apprehension —so insensate has the nation become. Once in for it, where will it stop! And a cause at best doubtful, with weak arms, and no idea where to strike! There are times when I feel the curse of an impotent voice.

To Mrs. Leslie Stephen.

Box Hill, *May* 21, 1885.

My dear Mrs. Leslie,—I will bear your offer in memory. I could not wish a sweeter companion for my girl than Stella. All young people are chameleons, Marie Eveleen at this period of her life rather more so than most; and it would be good for her to be set for a short space in a circle like yours. She is now with her mother at Eastbourne. I have rather better accounts of the sufferer. But after a struggle of nearly twelve months, hope is at an end with me. The doctors extinguish it. I live for the day, trying to work, though the machine has latterly got crazy.

Pray, remember me to the Philosopher very warmly. I am up at the chalet, alone, stepping down to the cottage for ten minutes to breakfast and to dinner. There is a chance that my wife will be brought back near the end of the month. She must be moved somewhere after the first week of June. We may take a house at Eastbourne. Nothing is decided. She has her nurse, whom you saw; a valiant woman in service. Dear me, what a shining apparition of rare old animal life to the coffined it would be were the beloved fraternity of Tramps beheld defiling up my garden walk!—Your most faithful

George Meredith.

If you will mention my name in heart's warmth to Mr. Lowell you will oblige me.

To Frederick Greenwood.

Box Hill, *June* 5, 1885.

My dear Greenwood,—I do not reply to reviews of my work, favourable or the reverse. But the friendliness of your little note in the St. James of yesterday is out of the regions of criticism, and I may notice it to thank you. Innovators in any department have a tough struggle to get to the field through the hedge for a hearing. Mine has lasted about thirty-five years, and still I have only to appear for the bawlers to be in uproar. As I know the world I do not complain. I am sensible not the less of generous voices. We are at issue on politics. You are a man who can rise to pure ether while in the sweat of the fray, and often, though we rarely meet, I grasp your hand. Here I am in the very pits of tragic life. My wife is desperately ill. There is no hope. She has twice passed under the hands of the surgeons, bearing it stoically. All my philosophy is at strain. She has a trained and devoted nurse, now the mainstay of our little home. Happily I can write, and have that refuge—the sole one. Adieu, dear friend.—Your faithful,

George Meredith.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, *June* 21, 1885.

My dear Morley,—I am glad thankfully that you wrote at once—for two reasons—one the blackest: that it came in time. She was pleased and comforted, signifying 'Write to him.' She has to-day evil symptoms. We know not how long the hunted bit of life will last. When I touched on your proposal to bring your wife, her cheek had a quiver at the offer, but she pointed to her mouth. Speechlessness oppresses her. The malady has now reduced her self-command, she cannot help excessive fretfulness. She bore the two operations with a noble fortitude.

Happily for me, I have learnt to live much in the spirit and see brightness on the other side of life, otherwise this running of my poor doe with the inextricable arrow in her flanks, would pull me down too. As it is, I sink at times. I need all my strength to stand the buffets of the harsh facts of existence. I wish it were I to be the traveller instead. I have long been ready for the start, can think prospectingly of the lying in earth. She has no thought but of this light—and would cry to it like a Greek victim under the knife.

For me to see you here would be a great rejoicing.—As I said, I live with you; absence cannot put a soiling finger on the love. That will last.—Do not forget the Admiral. He is as fond of you as I—reveres you; and you are at present more necessary to him. God with you.—Ever your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

GARRICK CLUB, *July* 2, 1885.

DEAREST FRED,—I am heartily glad that C—— has no place in the Government—for the consequences.

My wife goes on, with a good day and a bad. I brought Riette up to Lady Lawrence's yesterday for a change:—to hear the Strauss band, etc. She is a little Angel in waiting on her Mother, cooks, manages, and does all the work of domestic accounts; she needed some diversion.

As for Politics, it is a foul wind. I turn my back. Puffs of London dung-dust resemble it.—Your loving
GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. J. E. H. Gordon.

Box Hill, *August* 4, 1885.

My dear Mrs. Jim,—Your letter inviting Mariette is timely and you are one to whom I can trust my Dearie. The child is getting strained ; she wants change and rest. She has done everything in the house and for the comfort of her Mother. If you can take her in on Thursday, I will bring her by the train touching Ewell at 12.40 p.m. Let me hear. I shall be bound for London, so that I will beg you to send a maid to meet the girl. There is nothing new—signs of increasing weakness. . . .

She has some fear of the girl's being put on horseback by the pair of fanatics for riding. But I assured her you would wait till the sanction of the riding-school had been obtained. It was but one of the apprehensions of an invalid. She likes to think of the girl as with you and Jim. I will come to fetch my Dearie. Tell me the day. My love to you both—our hearts in thanks,

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Leslie Stephen.

Box Hill, *Sept.* 3, 1885.

Dear Mrs. Leslie,—Your letter pleased her. She signified her wish that it should be answered. Her state is now much weaker. Three days back, after a drive, when I was with her in our sitting-room, she had a painful seizure, lasting some time, slow to pass off ; and this pleasure of the drive—the one left to her—has to be abandoned. The fatigue of descending and mounting steps excites a weakened heart. Yesterday she insisted on coming downstairs, and was proud to show herself to us, but scarce was she on the sofa when again the fit was threatened. It wore away without exhausting her extremely.—We live between crises and respites, knowing what is to come, not daring to wish in any direction.

To-day is a procession in heaven of the whole army of clouds, from your quarter, and I have a vision of tyrant Thoby and protesting Nessa on the sands, with the remoter philosopher's expression of his profoundest thoughts in pipe-smoke. Would I were near and unburdened! Our love to you all.—Your faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *Sept.* 15, 1885.

DEAREST M.,—Your pleasant call to me from Grindelwald to come to you at Putney would have been answered in person, but the state of things here enchains me. She is dying. It is bed to grave. She suffers at times much distress, not anguish of the frame. Her sisters are with her, and a capable nurse, her attendant through all her trials. She revives and subsides. When in danger she feels her condition least.—After her end, I will offer myself to you for a day, on the chance. I know how you must be plucked at right and left on the Eve of a General Election. I want to consult you about Mdlle. Souvestre—for Mariette. The girl and her brother are strained. He will go to France for two or three weeks, she to friends. I think of her schooling. At Wimbledon she will not be very far from me; I might have her here on the Saturdays, or once a fortnight. Though I can bear solitude, I should be otherwise too solitary. Give my love to the mountaineers.—Yours wholly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *Sept.* 18, 1885.

DEAREST MORLEY,—The end has come. Yesterday the poor soul so hardly tried breathed her last. She looks

Mistress of the Kingdom of Rest. The close was painless, in the arms of her sister, at 10 to 6 evening. I returned from town 40 minutes later and found the dead hand warm—only not the squeeze that never failed at mine. With me she lives till I go out.

I do not know whether you have firm feelings at black ceremonials. If your engagements and state of mind permit, you would be very welcome by my side to back me on this forlorn march of dust. She had a warm affection for you always, and interest in your prominence and usefulness. No other has been asked.—Yours ever,

George Meredith.

To Frederick Jones.

Box Hill, *Sept.* 23, 1885.

My dear Friend,—She died peacefully, but after a long struggle of close on 16 months, comprising two operations, which were borne with stoical fortitude. I knew nothing of her malady until she had seen Paget. I suppose there was no hope from the first. I did hope. It was drowned at last by a seizure depriving her of speech—and so she remained till the end, quite dumb. This tragedy endured for nearly four months. There was great distress, no sharp physical anguish. Her last sigh was in her sister's arms last Thursday. I came 40 minutes later, to find her hand still warm, rest on her face. She lies in Dorking new Cemetery; I have bought ground for four, and shall be beside her.

She was fond of you and your wife. We often spoke of you.—Our Will has gone to his uncles in Normandy, much broken, poor lad. Mariette is with friends. I think of placing her with Mdlle. Souvestre at Wimbledon for her education. Then I am utterly alone. Perhaps you will some day come and cheer me.—My love to you both,

George Meredith.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Sept.* 26, 1885.

My dear Friend,—I am greatly comforted in the thought of my dear girl being under the care of your wife. This place of withered recollections is like an old life to be lived again without sunshine. I cross and recross it. Sharp spikes where flowers were. Death is death, as you say, but I get to her by consulting her thoughts and wishes—and so she lives in me. This, if one has the strength of soul, brings a spirit to us.—I feel the blow as I get more distant from it. While she lingered I could not hope for it to last, and now I could crave any of the latest signs of her breathing—a weakness of my flesh. When the mind shall be steadier, I shall have her calmly present—past all tears. . . . George Meredith.

To Mrs. Christopher Wilson.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Sept.* 28, 1885.

My dear Mrs. Wilson,—No friend of ours loved her or proved the love more deeply than you. She felt it. She was the best of wives, truest among human creatures. She lies in Dorking Cemetery, where I have bought ground for us all to be beside her in the dust. I believe in Spirit, and I have her with me here, though at present I cannot get to calm of thought, all the scenes of her long endurance, and the days of peace before it rise up.

Will is in Normandy with his uncles and cousins. My Mariette abides for a time with Mrs. John Morley at Wimbledon. I would fain have a governess to tend and instruct her, that she might be near me. But a young one would rouse tongues, it seems ; and an old one would hardly suit the child. I think of placing her under Mdlle. Souvestre at Wimbledon. Many friends of mine are acquainted with the lady, and value highly her discretion and accomplishments. Their girls have been at her school, have profited, and love her well. Mariette could then at least come to me once a fortnight—as for me, I would gladly visit you, but I am wretched when I quit this neighbourhood despite the misery of the associations. They are my cup. God bless you and all of yours. GEORGE MEREDITH.

To W. M. Meredith.

BOX HILL, DORKING,
ENGLAND, *Sept.* 30, 1885.

MY DEAR WILL,—. . . Judging by the weather with us to-day you must be having a bad time. Incessant S. Westerly rain: not a break. There is no news. I see no one.—I do not doubt that you think of your dear mother. Think of her as alive in the spirit. She is with you in your worthiest thoughts—and the nobler they are the more may you be sure of that.

To Mrs. J. E. H. Gordon.

BOX HILL, *Oct.* 12, 1885.

DEAR MRS. JIM,—Your account of the lady you propose is excellent and takes me. It would give me a home to have Mariette here with her, and I think my girl would be happy. . . . I would help to amuse her when we meet at dinner, and in the day perchance. She must have, however, the prospect of a dull life—solitary country life. Could she bear it? If so verily, my inclinations are that way—Mdlle. Souvestre is full at present.—Yours warmly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, *Oct.* 13, 1885.

MY DEAR ADMIRAL,—Your letter—just as I was dating this to you. I am better, rather, but very weak in the stomach. I live chiefly on Dr. Nichols' Food of Health. —I wish to come and fetch my girl. I may have to send Arthur. To-morrow I may know my condition, and will write.

Plymouth—your partizans urge you to pursue. Ah! I remember how ardent and confident the Liberals at Southampton. But this—even were you to succeed—will be a short Parliament. In addition, mainly an Irish campaign: a question upon which Radicals have not yet made up their minds. Have you?—with sufficient clearness to venture to express it? I would decide on waiting. Policy, money, your health, and sceptical view of the Plymouth electors, dictate the resolve.—Yours with full heart,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Sir William Hardman.[1]

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 9, 1885.

DEAREST SIR WILLIAM,—But you will own that I have been beforehand with Her Majesty, and dubbed you long since by virtue of poetic anticipation. Keenly I saw the stroke of her gracious blade on your shoulder, and saw without jealousy. What says the Laureate?—

'While you mount up from high to higher,
Nor spy to your ambition bound,
I grovel on untitled ground
A scarce legitimate esquire!'

Up, up! it cannot stop.

There is the tragic thought. And a Bar'net, what will the country instantly demand of you? O Sir Abram Tuck! But there must be a son to inherit the honours.—Unless, as with Lord Viscount Wolseley, your honours are directed in descent to the female issue.—What say you? Shall we agitate forthwith?—Tell me and I will begin.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] William Hardman received the honour of knighthood at the New Year, 1885.

Sir Helen Hardman, Bart., sounds well.

To F. H. Evans.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 29, 1885.

DEAR SIR,—I am much in your debt for the interest you take in my works. I had not forgotten the promise, but had mislaid your address, and what you will is at your disposal;—a photograph, if you please, when there is one. I am told of a scheme for a subscription to have a portrait of me painted by some cunning brush; but the like are costly, and I cannot permit those who most think well of me to expend their money on such an object. So, when I can stir my sluggishness, I purpose to go to the photographer and send them copies of the thing they wish to have—in return for their names in an album, which will not require subscriptions, and will be more precious to me. The publishers of the new edition speak well of the sale, but have not proposed to issue other than the novels. As for my verse, it has always been a charge on me, and I have not heart to pay a second time for publication.—Believe me, very faithfully yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *Jan.* 1, 1886.

MY DEAR FRIEND J. M.,—I wish you strength for this year. I think of you standing valiantly in the front, and am partly consoled for my own infructuous musings, though the comparison sometimes presses. I am still at my questions with death, and the many pictures of the dear soul's months of anguish. When the time was, and even shortly after, I was in arms, and had at least the practical philosophy given to us face to face with our enemy. Now I have sunk, am haunted. It causes me to write of her, which scorches the brand. I have need of all my powers. The thought often uppermost is in amazement at the importance we attach to our hold of sensation. So much grander, vaster, seems her realm of silence. She is in earth, our mother, and I shall soon follow. And in truth, the doing of good service is the right use of this machine. Therefore are you enviable to me. I am at Effingham Hill to-night. We shall talk of you. God bless you and all of your household.—Your ever loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

BOX HILL, *Jan.* 15, 1886.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I have been, as you know at heart, warmly with you, even to communing with you, all through this Parliament. But occupied as you are, you put a spell upon your friend's obtrusiveness through his respect for you and the good work you are doing. I should like the chat. I deny it to myself in the thought that I can be of such poor service. Now you are driving on another electoral campaign, and the small chance is gone.—As regards Newcastle, we may have good hope. The ultimate aggregate of votes appear to me less auspicious in the horoscope—perhaps because I listen to the buzz about me, and spell from London journals. To a measure like this you seek to carry, the English must be dragged after repeated bruises. They cannot jump in a good cause.—Morison has given me excellent reports of your health. My vows are mainly in that direction, all other things looking well. My love to your household, and I am ever your friend,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Miss Wilson.

Box Hill. *Jan.* 28, 1886.

My dear Julia,—I will keep your letter in mind. I feel your warm heart of friendship for good souls, and would do my best to help. I cannot advertize my name. Even if I were a great gun of the world it would be impossible, and for one in my obscure position absurd and serviceless. What I can do for good Miss Hooke in recommending her warmly, I will. . . .

I will call on the first occasion when I am in town and disengaged. I am rarely there.

Some day in warmer weather let your inclinations lead you to us. Come and be loved by country people.—I am your devoted George Meredith.

To F. H. Evans.

Box Hill, *March* 16, 1886.

Dear Sir,—I return to you herewith Hollyer's photograph of Burne Jones, which is admirable. I have kept it much too long, and beg you to pardon me. I think I should prefer this method, but am rather in the hands of friends, who here and there propose eulogized amateurs.

I will bear in mind your complimentary wish to have a copy when the thing is done. For myself, I do not see the importance of it; and I have never shared the enthusiasm of certain acquaintances for a fright of themselves on the carte. The human waves roll like the seas, with a momentary difference in the features, and that small, and not distinctly significant. I like to see the portraits of our greatest, and of beautiful women. Not being the one or the other, I fancy it will require accident or the police to subject me to the operation.—Yours very truly, George Meredith.

To Frederick Jones.

Box Hill, *April* 15, 1886.

My dear Jones,—I have a copy of 'Vittoria' for Ethel, if she will honour me in accepting it.—The pillow is a big chapter. Every night's experience adds to the bulk. I have now likened it to life—such a mixture it is of good and bad. True enough that my head makes little impression, but that does not matter. I complain —I don't complain—I take life as it is—I state the fact that when I come to consciousness in the morning, I find my poll dissevered from my spinal column, as if Somnus had served as headsman.

To Miss J. M. Hooke.

Box Hill, *May* 29, 1886.

My dear Miss Hooke,—I write to you personally, instead of sending a formal testimonial of your merits and efficiency, for in this manner I can more fully express the warmth of my gratitude to you for your long and able services to my daughter Mariette, by whom, as by all my household, you are honoured not less than you are loved.

I consider the girl's precision of touch at the piano due to your unwearied patience and diligence in the instruction of her: and with this you combined an affectionate interest that I bear in mind as a further proof of your fitness to be a preceptress of the young. Those who secure you for a similar post will, I can say from experience, have reason to congratulate themselves: you possess the three qualities sure to command esteem—competency, the sense of duty, and sweetness of temper. Believe me, my dear Miss Hooke, most truly yours,

George Meredith.

To Admiral Maxse.

Box Hill, *June* 9, 1886.

Dear Admiral,—I confess that a faint form of decent excuse for your conduct in leaving me without one word of you after your header into the Atlantic would have partly appeased my natural indignation. I put it by among other things for the Day of my Vesuvius.

Of course you are crowing over the defeat of the Irish Bill. I hear it two years ahead, and what a deflection of the notes! What a lemon-drag of the happy facial muscles!—It is one of the things which must be, whether we like it or not. Few do, but we have made the Necessity that drives us.—Yours in heart, George Meredith.

To Sir Francis Burnand.

Box Hill, Dorking, *June* 16, 1886.

Dear Frank,—Downs to right and to left; grass rides for miles. Capital for cock horse. On in a minute, only down 's the word when you say Off. Distance from town 23 miles (stadii 47). Way down 's by Putney, Wimbledon, then look South and cross flat to Ewell, over to right of Epsom Grand Stand, with Headley Church in view—on to 't, and there turn sharp to right, as if that cheek had got a slap and you thought of being indignant, a very Briton: so down Headley Lane Southwestward: then in Mickleham Vale sharp to left, as 'twere with indigestible pun stuck in rib and What wretch did it:—You are at Box Hill; 24 paces up on left a flint cottage: there lives with her Governess my girl, who says, you are the man (very queer girl) she wants to see. High by wood, between a pine and a beech, a chalet where your friend, at home any day, lunch 1½ p.m.: dinner 6½: bed later. George Meredith.

To Thomas Hardy.

Box Hill, Dorking, *July* 1, 1886.

My dear Sir,—I shall be very glad to welcome you at my small cottage any day when you give me warning that it is agreeable to you to come; and yet more so if your wife will do me that honour. As the weather promises Fair, I would name Saturday or Sunday. But should it be rainy on the appointed day, let the bond snap; for our habitation here depends on the beauty of the country for attractiveness;—unless, of course, the S. West is blowing, and then, as you know, the cloud of one hour is the golden curtain of another.—Very truly yours,
George Meredith.

To Marie E. Meredith.

Box Hill, *July* 24, 1886.

My own Dearie,—The post-card from Rouen arrived by noon next day, and relieved and delighted Papa. The letter was very welcome. Only you must not travel in a Dames Seules unless there are other Dames in the carriage. Say how much I regret to hear of your Aunt Marie's loss.

And now to tell you of news. This morning as I descended the hill to breakfast, Cole was perceived half-way up, with a dog whom I took for naughty Koby—the same having run away, as usual. But the dog appeared to be of a darker colour, and handsomer, I thought, when I drew nearer. It is the dearest little Dachs, from the Admiral, of a smooth, glossy full brown; exactly like Isly in shape, with the greyhound's back and belly, the escutcheon, fine tail, big paws, pretty face, full of fun and inquiry. Cole wanted to lead him with a string:—he was indignant and would not stir. The string removed, he followed merrily. Koby, on perceiving him, stood stupefied, and has remained so. Here the little fellow is, in my room, running round with a fir-cone in his mouth, now and then having a pull at an end of the carpet. Dined with Mrs. Drummond last night. They want me Sunday. On Monday to Lady Farrer's. Life rather dull, but tolerable. Much amused by the stranger. Tell Will about him, and that I will write to him next week. Also that Mr. Comyns Carr spent the day with me on Thursday, saw the illustration to my little poem, and was so pleased with it that he carried it off for immediate printing, and hoped to have more. He asked what a Dearie did. I replied that she could roll eyes and gape with any girl going. He said he thought that a fortune for her. Papa kisses his dear one. Love to all about you, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To W. M. Meredith.

BOX HILL, *July* 30, 1886.

MY DEAR WILL,—I speculate on the weather you may be having. Here it is fine to-day; we have had it cloudy and coldish. Improvement seems in view. Let me know of your change of address.—Comyns Carr has taken your sketch for the little poem, with marked approval, and will be glad of more from you. Say whether you decidedly object to the appending of your name, or prefer initials. You might devote an evening or two to 'Echo and the Woodman':—a woodland scene, with figure swinging axe, one log down, and study of trees, peep of a clearing to right or left. It should be agreeable work, and might lead to something, besides pocket-money. He recommends attention to water-colours. Altogether you would have thought him encouraging.—I trust your health is restored. If they give you a mount at Fontainebleau, be careful first to examine your horse, and get your seat firmly before you start. I shall look for a report of the fellows you meet. Be open with them, and sympathetic. They are friendly when we don't bring the Channel between. I wrote yesterday a second letter to Riette. It is yet undecided what I shall do. MSS. have come, and proposals for articles. . . . Meanwhile I have my pleasure in the belief that you and Riette are happy.—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Robert Louis Stevenson.

BOX HILL, *August* 3, 1886.

MY DEAR STEVENSON,—Letter just arrived and fills me with joy.

House below quite empty and open to you. Dearie Girl in Normandy with Will. Beg Mrs. Stevenson prepare to stay. Hope you will come to-morrow and bring Colvin. Send word—and whether you can walk at all. If not, fly shall be at station. Telegraph if this does not arrive in time for post to-day. Name the train. Written in haste.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Marie E. Meredith.

BOX HILL, *August* 10, 1886.

NOTES OF A LONELY PAPA

On Sunday Old Will crossed Chalet windows about ¼ to 12 A.M., after a foggy passage across Channel. He looks improved. Wish the poor, dear fellow could have had longer holiday. He left for London yesterday at noon.—Letter from Mr. Trower inviting me to Taplow on Thames. Dine morrow Mickleham Hall, next day Burford. A pretty state of subjection I am in, and shall be till I refuse all invitations to dinner—which I shall have to do.—Coming home from Bryants at night in long

Opera coat, was mistaken for Policeman by two men who hailed me, with information that little boy had been lost on the hill. Fancy the poor babe out at night alone in the box covers!—

Bites! Harvesters in battle array.

O 'tis my delight
In the dead of the night
To rush to the Lucifer match,
And illume all the room
For a sight of the bite
That has cloven my slumbers to fill me with spite,
And indulge in a desperate scratch!

A Dearie's voluminous letter just arrived. I had Will's account of Dreux. She confirms it. Bless her!

Letter of 12 pages from the youngster who once called on a 'visit of admiration,' and is in the Post Office Savings Bank. He came down on Bank Holiday, but had the modesty not to call, though he saw me entering Chalet.

Last week Louis Stevenson and wife here for 4 days. Pitts drove them out each day. Louis left with regret, we gave him a taste of return to health. Flora Shaw[1] came for a night.—No more at present. Love to all. Much love to the girl of my heart.

George Meredith.

To Admiral Maxse.

Box Hill, *Oct.* 26, 1886.

My dear Fred,—Though exceedingly anxious to pluck our well-beloved Old Radical Admiral out of the Mixed Pickle Party into which he has taken, with his usual abruptness, this last misdirected jump, I have no hope from you of rescuing him yet. I know a Norse if one pulls him the way he does not mean to go. Otherwise I might have put a strain on myself and accepted your invitation. I had to be in town yesterday to see Governess, and Arthur lying at St. Thomas's Home.—The former I have settled now for Christmas. She is in certain essential respects a jewel. Irish, widow of a Frenchman, recommended by friends of mine and hers, well born, well bred, brisk, intelligent, rational.—By the way, I am told of an article on me in 'Spectator' of the 16th. If you have it will you send it to me on loan ?—Ever affectionately, GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Author and journalist, and at one time head of the Colonial Department of the *Times*, daughter of the late General Shaw, C.B. Married Sir Frederick Lugard in 1902.

To Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Oct.* 27, 1886.

DEAR MRS. STEVENSON,—Cole, our gardener, bids me tell you that the slips and cuttings have been despatched to Skerryvore. He thinks he has omitted none of the commanded.

This wind, dire East, makes me brood anxiously over images of Louis. When I wrote in jest of colds my mind was not impressed by the dear fellow lying in his bed weak and beaten back. I shall hope to hear some news, pray for it to be good.

I am just finishing a poem, 'The Appeasement of Demeter,' that it is just possible Louis may like. For myself, I am no longer sure of my work at the best —the forty years of jeering in my ear corrects that original exultation of the producer.—May your boy have a favourable voyage !—Ever faithfully yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To George Stevenson.[1]

Box Hill, Dorking, *Nov.* 7, 1886.

Dear Sir,—You have the right to assume that one could not be churlish with the writer of so flattering a letter. It comes straight home from the fellow-throbber directing it, and let me tell you, in reply to your invitation, that if ever, on a visit to London, you are disposed to run out of it 23 miles into lovely country, you will find here a small cottage, a simple host, a warm welcome, plain cookery, sound wine of the best. For though I have latterly ceased the drinking of it myself, I hold to never poisoning my guests. With regard to Scotland, I love land and people, but am ashamed to say that I have not yet crossed the border. In my youth I was too insignificant to be hailed over ; of late there have been beckonings. I generally travel on the Continent.

Letters written in the tone marking yours are a pure refreshment to me. I present my respects to your wife, venturing only to remark, in reply to what she says of a novel of mine, that no one thing in the world can ever be cited as the best. Sufficient if she thinks it good.—I am, dear sir, most faithfully yours,

George Meredith.

To Sidney Colvin.

Box Hill, *Nov.* 10, 1886.

My dear Colvin,—It is good news that there is a chance of having you here—and yet more that your invalid[2] is better ; I would I might hope, permanently ! Come, fair or foul. It is sure to be sweeter here than in London, where, after the rain, frosts will impose cwts. of atmospheric pressure, enough to flatten hats on heads without intervention of the larking rough. And a treatise on Keats[1] should be finished in the place where he did abide for awhile, between one poem and another, conceiving, I have fancied, a spot where 'damp moisture breeds the pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth.' You know our cottage: I cannot spare a proper winter room for mighty authors in their pangs of labour nigh delivery. But you will dine with us?—walk with me, much inspired.

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[1] George Stevenson of Glasgow.

[2] The invalid was Stevenson.

The Burford inn is now in good hands, excellently managed, landlord and landlady most homely.

Give warm love to the Stevensons.

Write.—Yours ever, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To W. Morton Fullerton.

BOX HILL, DORKING,
ENGLAND, *Nov.* 15, 1886.

DEAR SIR,—I have to plead an absence from home in excuse for the delay in my reply to you. Let me assure you that I am sensible of the honour you do me in thinking about my work at all. As for me, I am, I trust, to the full as modest a person as I am bound to be. In origin I am what is called here a nobody, and my pretensions to that rank have always received due encouragement by which, added to a turn of my mind, I am inclined to Democracy, even in Letters, and tend to think of the claims of others when I find myself exalted. This is the advantage I have gained from sharp schooling. Good work is the main object. Mine I know to be faulty. I can only say generally that I have done my best to make it worthy. On the other hand, simple appreciation, without comparisons of me with contemporaries, is welcome to my heart. Some one—is it you?—accuses me of cynicism. Against that I do protest. None of my writings can be said to show a want of faith in humanity, or of sympathy with the weaker, or that I do not read the right meaning of strength. And it is not only women of the flesh, but also women in the soul whom I esteem, believe in, and would aid to development. There has been a confounding of the tone of irony (or satire in despair) with cynicism. I must have overcharged the dose, to have produced such an impression. But enough of myself; I do not willingly take to the theme. Americans appear to have received my work very generously. Since their most noble closing of the Civil War, I have looked to them as the hope of our civilization: and in reading Professor Jebb's account of Sophocles on the Harvard stage, I have seen that they have the spirit to excel in classics and belles lettres. Therefore I am justly flattered by their praise, if I win it; their censure, if they deal it to me, I meditate on.

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[1] Sidney Colvin was then at work on the life of Keats for the 'English Men of Letters' series.

Should you visit England, know that there is, about 23 miles S.W. of London, a small cottage warmly open to you. The country is beautiful; nowhere in England is richer foliage or wilder downs and fresher woodland. My daughter and her governess will entertain you below, I in the chalet, which is my study, on the borders of the wood above. There I work and sleep, living en hermite—though not cynically.—I am your most faithful

George Meredith.

To George Stevenson.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Nov.* 17, 1886.

My dear Sir,—I reply to you before the days lose memory and have to coin apologies—base metal tokens unworthy of your sterling. Chiefly I write to say that I would not think of separating you one wink of a minute from the lady who has given you happiness, and who will, if I may opine by previous instances, bestow on me a yet greater pleasure than the presence of her lord. So much you can bear to hear. You will both be welcome; only, pray, take to your minds in advance that this is a real cottage, depending for its attractions on beautiful scenery. Couples I have to quarter at the adjacent inn, where I have a room for my own, and a good hostess lights the fire of comfort.—I have had several letters concerning reviewers and the review you mention. But I take habitually a bracing bath in my own criticism of my work, so that these East winds cause no catarrhs to me, though apparently my friends are doomed to be afflicted by them.—I beg you to present my respects to your wife; and do me the favour to write when you have the mind.—Your faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

To George Stevenson.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 2, 1886.

DEAR MR. STEVENSON,—I bow to the gift, as a tree that is taken by volumes of the South-Wester showering increase to earth; and the top is bent and the foliage ruffled, but honest ground rejoices, and we regain our stature after some discomposure. In plainer words, if you confuse you touch me, and I am too sensible of your warmth of heart to protest, though I am rather whelmed, the shower being a sudden one and copious. Scottish enthusiasm is not new to my understanding; it is only new to me to be the object of such a cordial gale.—On the evening of your re-union my daughter said, 'There will be happiness in Glasgow to-night': for I had spoken of the wife awaiting you, and that your marriage came under the title of blest. I am glad to think of you together, and shall have you in my mind. Present our respects to the lady, whom I trust some day to know, to be the richer for knowing.—Your very faithful

George Meredith.

To George Stevenson.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Feb.* 16, 1887.

Dear Mr. Stevenson,—I received the etching and handed it to my girl, who was delighted with it, and will by these means become acquainted with her father's writings. The volume is now in charge of Macmillan's Edinburgh printers, and should be ready for issue by the end of March,—if the Germans do not force on a war. I call it, 'Ballads and Poems of Tragic Life'; and there will be another to follow, of more spiritual flavour. Perhaps, if I am not driven to the novel, I shall be at a Poem treating of all the Explosives in the modern mind and manufactories: The Anarchiad. What do you say?—The hero, Karl Onyx, has as many adventures as Odysseus. I am at times moved strongly by the theme. On the other hand I have a Knight of Perfectibility in prose, who is very seductive to my pen. Neither would fill the purse, and so I look at them as a lean lover looks at damsels that sit gazing over his uncrowned pate upon the wreathed and portly. The novel is my brawny scullery Jill.—When I was last in town the friend entertaining me made appointment with a photographer and dragged me to him. I was put into eight attitudes —for which ignominy I am to be repaid by an exhibition of eight grey beasts vowing them one. A copy shall be forwarded to you.—I do not know what I may be doing in the summer. A lady, whom I knew a girl, writing that her salted locks permit of it, proposes that I should join her in May at Florence and go to Tarentum, where she spends merry life. I hesitate.—Present my compliments to your wife, and believe me, warmly yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Editor of the 'Pall Mall Gazette.'

Feb. 25, 1887.

The Ambleside Railway.

You apply to me for my views on this project. The arguments are before the public, and my opinion may be put just a little less briefly than a vote in the urn. When I see Utilitarians and Sentimentalists foot to foot at the tug, I am accustomed to think without regret that the latter will eventually cross the line of contention heels up in ignominious attitude; and where there is dissension between rich and poor, I do not commonly side with the former. I am against the project because it does not promise to be of good use to the people. If it did, then would neither Orrest Head nor 'the torrents' nor the 'beautiful romance of nature effectively protest against the wrong.' We have here one of the few instances of Sentimentalists pleading for the general interests, Conservatives upholding the cause of Democrats. I suppose that an Ambleside railway would offer a paying investment to the Shareholder; it would fatten some publican; and it would spare the excursionist that exercise of his legs and chest which it is beneficial for him to take. Englishmen would have at command the joy of rattling through scenes of beauty at so many miles an hour, and being pitched out at stations in packs after the fashion of the American 'hog-bouncer.' What they would forfeit for these privileges let them summon poetry to tell them. Prose, I will admit, does not make much head against an enemy having such mastery of the ears of the prosy; and if they can be deceived by the rough fun and affectation of the common-sense tone of the sham Utilitarians proposing and backing the measure, they may nationally say good-bye to the poetry of nature and art. A proposition to run tramways across Hyde Park would, changing the scale, be the equivalent of this for driving rails through the Lake District. Londoners —in their present mood at least—ladies, dandies, mild revolutionists, total subversives, would mob together, and file in procession to baffle the threat. It cannot be thought that Englishmen will allow their one recreative holiday ground of high hill and deep dale (I would add 'consecrated by one of our noblest poets,' but that I am on my guard against treating the subject emotionally) to be a place of no retreat. They must have ceased to discern the quality of true utility if they permit it. Spiritual beauty serves us to the full as much as material force, and it must have its homes of seclusion to live. We must guard it to keep it. The project smells of all that is vilest in English middle-class Philistinism, suggestive of State beer-bars, where the adulterated draught precipitates the reckless excursionist, who has had his healthy exercise done for him by the steam-engine, into scarlet pugilism, and his holiday, after laying a curse on the valley, closes its prancings under sentences of the magistrates.

To George Stevenson.

Box Hill, Dorking, *April* 21, 1887.

My dear Mr. Stevenson,—. . . Will you say that my conscience is hollow as a drum when it requires a tap outside to give sound? I reserved the reply to your acceptable offer of your etchings until I had finished correcting proofs of a new volume and gathered matter par le monde to discourse on; for the hermit of the chalet sees little that can make him an amusing correspondent. Work from your hand will give us full pleasure, be sure. . . . Latterly I have been forced to discontinue prose, owing to evil digestion and nerves. Verse does not tax me so heavily. Even letters have to be postponed. I am, believe me, sensible to the kindness of your proposals of your tonic highlands. If I had time! I may yet do so before the yellow season is over.

We Liberals, Radicals, practical Christians, are going through a gloomy time. Politics, even when they have us in thorniest thickets, do not obscure me. I see under the edge of the cloudiest. But it is nevertheless distressing to observe one's countrymen bemuddled by their alarms and selfish temporary interests. On Tuesday night I was a guest of the Eighty Club, was introduced to Gladstone (who favoured me with the pleased grimace of the amiable public man in the greeting of an unknown), and heard a speech from him enough to make a cock robin droop his head despondently. We want a young leader. This valiant, prodigiously gifted, in many respects admirable, old man is, I fear me, very much an actor. His oratory has the veteran rhetorician's artifices —to me painfully perceptible when I see him waiting for his effects, timing those to follow. Morley and Asquith are able lieutenants. The captain is nowhere. Were he present, and of a size to be distinguishable, the majority, to judge of them by their temper, would stone him.—At any rate you can say that Scotland leads to light. Haldane, the member for East Lothian, brings down Dillon on a second visit to me next Sunday week. You are an artist. I should like you to see and study Dillon's eyes. They are the most beautiful I have ever beheld in a head

—clear, deep wells with honesty at bottom. It must be admitted that he had no theme save the political.

Present my homage to your wife and believe me, most faithfully yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To George Stevenson.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *April* 30, 1887.

MY DEAR MR. STEVENSON,—Your letter alighted on mine when the great Bustard was hopping up to the Chalet to command a height from which to beat a wing without too tediously flapping earth. This it is to be not a cock Robin, and to have a broad wing. I should by rights have written my thanks for the welcome Etchings on the arrival of them. I dally with my impressions to let the crudeness ripen. They are down at the Cottage, so I have not the name of that low foreshore and edificed horn of bay which struck me most. That and Haden. Was Haden your master? It is a splendid head. Oh! you may do as you will with mine. My girl shall send you another of Hollyer's—to me hateful: a supercilious grey beast commenting within himself disdainfully on a rival poet's verse.—Haldane and Dillon come again to-morrow, and I believe that Grant Allen and his wife (a match for yours!) will meet them—Now, O Briton, I beg of you to take imagination on this great domestic question of the Government of Ireland, or even with you the claymore will soon be out. The hero of 'Beauchamp's Career' just bears with me, so stiffly have his bristles been rubbed up by the Irish. But consider what they have had to do even to rouse drowsy Bull! Petards discharged between his knees merely fretted him. They had to be exploded under his chin. Think of the French, Russians, Poles and Socialist Germans, you will own that the Irish are by comparison a docile and a patient people—and the more, seeing how intensely sympathetic their natures. Dillon would not at first visit an English house, but since he came to know the English he has humanized to real brotherhood. In truth, as known by our laws in Ireland we must be hated. I have friends who conceive that the Irish are scheming for a Republic. They have their wits: they are not the people to put the hand to the throat. They cannot exist without England or in opposition—and they know it.—My short article was in a back number of the 'Fortnightly,' I forget the month: it regarded the argument as exhausted, appealed to common sense and right feeling. I would rather have the simple form of a central Government, only that England at the close of eighty odd years has proved herself unfit for the task. I met at a table in our valley Barry O'Brien, and later we drove into Dorking to hear him deliver a Lecture on Home Rule. I see he has an article in this month's (May) 'Nineteenth Century.' You will find it instructive, if it at all resembles his Lecture. I wish you could meet Dillon. For me I open to men all round, from Napoleon to Sawney Beau, Barnum to John Howard, but this man has a head and eyes for poets to study, etchers to stamp. By the way, Maurice Pollock, brother of Frederick, was here when your consignment came, and took warmly to the foreshore. You are good in saying you excuse me when I do not write immediately. I am touched, I do not forget; sometimes I hold ideas in the same way for months; and they are the dearer to me, and I am much more in communication with them, than if I punctually put them to paper. More of me is in them.—Be moved now and then to write. You give me breath.

To the Lady whose Jubilee of wise Government I shall not live to help celebrate, but may you with lustiest lung and a leg that can show a calf, I bow, and am, yours faithfully, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To W. G. Collings.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 5, 1887.

Dear Sir,—Letters addressed to my Club are not so numerous as to cause my ordering that they shall be forwarded; and thus it is that yours will have come to my hands too late, I fear, for my reply to serve in your discussion. Still you shall have it, the subject being important.—I do not abjure wine, when it is old and of a good vintage. I take it rarely. I think that the notion of drinking any kind of alcohol as a stimulant for intellectual work, can have entered the minds of those only who snatch at the former that they may conceive a fictitious execution of the latter. Stimulants may refresh, and may even temporarily comfort, the body after labour of brain; they do not help it—not even in the lighter kinds of labour. They unseat the judgment, pervert vision. Productions cast off by the aid of the use of them, are but flashy trashy stuff—or exhibitions of the prodigious in wildness or grotesque conceit, of the kind which Hoffmann's tales give, for example; he was one of the few at all eminent, who wrote after drinking. Schiller, in a minor degree—not to the advantage of his composition. None of the great French or English.—Yours very truly, George Meredith.

To George Stevenson.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 21, 1887.

My dear Mr. Stevenson,—Is this the face?—It conjures before me one empowered to make a man blest above his fellows.—My girl cries out that she wishes to know the lady instantly. I have the feeling that I do know her, could swear to her possession of all qualities irradiating and sanctifying a home. Frankly we are in love with the goodness and the pleasingness of this face. If any of my writings have given so sweet a person satisfaction, I am rewarded for labour in obscurity. Tell her, I beg you, that I bow to her and am henceforth involved in her happiness. Of yours there cannot be doubt. I trust that the tides of life may sustain you both. From what I have seen of you, and this of her, it needs but life to be prayed for in your case. Mariette packs up a little volume of 'Ballads and Poems' for your wife's acceptance, with the request that she will take them entirely at her leisure.—Believe me, very warmly yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, *June* 27, 1887.

MY DEAR FRED,—. . . We are still in the drench of the Jubilee. Our Queen has thanked her subjects, printing her personal pronoun in Capitals. People are beginning to complain of the vexatious drought, dust, irritation, confusion and threatened disaster caused by the unvaried prevalence of this dry Norse wind. There is a general groan for a change. Another week of it, and we shall have the Mitred Cant commanding petitions to his Lord for a change. Ah! if he would but appeal to the purblind Commons to cease blowing politically Norse in compliance with the wishes of their overpeers. Your godson had an upset on the Thames t' other day, and coolly mounted his outrigger, like Arion the dolphin's back, till shoremen came to his musical note. What I am going to do this summer I know not. My last poor volume continues to receive drubbings from reviewers, while I have private letters from distinguished persons, meant for balm. My love to the dear girls: all my heart to you.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

I have not received the French poems. What if the Ode to France were despatched to Clémenceau with a word from you. Tell me.

To G. W. Foote.

Box Hill, Dorking, *July* 6, 1887.

Dear Sir,—I know what it is to find myself standing in the public ways with a printer's block upon me. Your remarks on the verses have given me pleasure. They seem to have violently offended very many.

You carry on a brave battle, for the best of causes, personally profitless as you must know it to be, and my good wishes are with you. May they be as acceptable as I have found your friendly criticism!—Very truly yours,

George Meredith.

To G. P. Baker.

Box Hill, Dorking,
England, *July* 22, 1887.

My dear Sir,—When at the conclusion of your article on my works, you say that a certain change in public taste, should it come about, will be to some extent due to me, you hand me the flowering wreath I covet. For I think that all right use of life, and the one secret of life, is to pave ways for the firmer footing of those who succeed us; as to my works, I know them faulty, think them of worth only when they point and aid to that end. Close knowledge of our fellows, discernment of the laws of existence, these lead to great civilization. I have supposed that the novel, exposing and illustrating the natural history of man, may help us to such sustaining roadside gifts. But I have never started on a novel to pursue the theory it developed. The dominant idea in my mind took up the characters and the story midway.

You say that there are few scenes. Is it so throughout? My method has been to prepare my readers for a crucial exhibition of the personae, and then to give the scene in the fullest of their blood and brain under stress of a fiery situation.

Concerning style, thought is tough, and dealing with thought produces toughness. Or when strong emotion is in tide against the active mind, there is perforce confusion. Have you found that scenes of simple emotion or plain narrative were hard to view? When their author revised for the new edition, his critical judgment approved these passages. Yet you are not to imagine that he holds his opinion combatively against his critics. The verdict is with the observer.

In the Comedies, and here and there where a concentrated presentment is in design, you will find a 'pitch' considerably above our common human; and purposely, for only in such a manner could so much be shown. Those high notes and condensings are abandoned when the strong human call is heard—I beg you to understand merely that such was my intention.

Again, when you tell me that Harvard has the works, and that Young Harvard reads them, the news is of a kind to prompt me to fresh productiveness and higher. In England I am encouraged but by a few enthusiasts. I read in a critical review of some verses of mine the other day that I was 'a harlequin and a performer of antics.' I am accustomed to that kind of writing, as our hustings orator is to the dead cat and the brickbat flung in his face—at which he smiles politely; and I too; but after many years of it my mind looks elsewhere. Adieu to you.—Most faithfully yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

4 DRAYCOT TERRACE,
ST. IVES, CORNWALL, 1887.

MY DEAR FRED,—I return Ivor's letter. It is written as on Lonestar straight ahead, good aim at the object, a spanking fine run to the end, and it pictures him. Here we have the Leslie Stephens close by, which is very agreeable, Riette and her friend Louison are finding a good companion in Stella. Sandy bays, good bathing, fine country within reach—the Lizard, the Land's End: seal-haunted promontories under view. It is not your upper air of Alps, but next to it. More than ten hours by rail! One settles to the carriage by that time and would prefer, instead of turning out, to run on for mountains. How I love the sight of them at 4 A.M.! However I won't pine. GEORGE MEREDITH.

To George Stevenson.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Sept.* 12, 1887.

DEAR MR. STEVENSON,—It is possible that Hymen's gentle durance may have withheld you from reducing the Shetland's head of deer to 24; or equally the contrary; that you have done the work of destruction by permit of Love made happy in wedlock. Think not meanly of me, nor confide it to the God, if I state my wish for the 25th to continue living—which can but mean that the ceremony hangs fire.—My girl and I, with a Miss Macpherson her friend, went to St. Ives, Cornwall, for a month, where I took a house to be near the Leslie Stephens, and we had excellent bathing on firm sands, choice of grand rock scenery, walks diversified by scalings of crags and vaultings over 3 dozen stone fences per diem. We had 30 days of brilliant weather. Then to Torquay, where Riette has a resident aunt, and the heavens pelted us. I left the two to weather it. I rather lean to Tyrol for next year. But we know not. I write little at present owing to impeded peptics. Verse, which does not tax me as does an extended field of prose, comes in a spout by fits.—I think of you both, shall hear from you with pleasure.

By the way, my son and our gardener Cole, whom I had down for a holiday, saw a seal in one of the bays near St. Ives. Could Scotland, except in her fringe of islands, show as much? I see that Max O'Rell makes head against the silly English dictum upon 'Scotch Wut.' The English have their notion from feeding on bright French wit and thinking they have appropriated it. But the thing is not native to them. I bow to the lady of your heart, and am very truly yours,

George Meredith.

To Admiral Maxse.

Box Hill, *Sept.* 22, 1887.

My dear Admiral,— . . . I have gone through the horrible book of Mendes, with the sensation of passing down the ventre de Paris and out at anus into the rat-rioting sewers, twisted, whirled, tumbled amid the frothing filth, the deadly stench, the reek and roar of the damned. Cloacina sits on such productions; Dementia, born of the Nameless, dissects them. Nigh the end of it, Zola seemed to me a very haven, Maupassant a garden. Who reads must smell putrid for a month. I saw in the latter leaves uncut that you soon had enough. It is the monsterization of Zolaism. O what a nocturient, cacaturient crew has issued of the lens of the Sun of the mind on the lower facts of life!—on sheer Realism, breeder at best of the dung-fly! Yet has that Realism been a corrective of the more corruptingly vapourous with its tickling hints at sensuality. It may serve ultimately in form of coprolite to fatten poor soil for better produce.—Your loving

George Meredith.

By the way, is it possible that a gentleman could telegraph to a lady, 'Your husband is a villain,' etc. See P. M. Gtte.

To Miss Wilson.[1]

Box Hill, *Nov.* 2, 1887.

My very dear Julia,—I wish I could have seen you on Thursday. When I heard the news, my first thought was of our lost Marie's joy in it. I saw her face, heard her cry of pleasure, imagined her busy play of mind about her Julia caught at last! And caught, we will believe, having some faith in the young lady's judgment, by a worthy fowler. I should like to see him. Meanwhile I am without Marie's guidance as to what little memento of our interest in you might be acceptable, and until I can hit on the right thing, I fall back forlornly on—a set of my prose works! if you will do me the honour to accept them, as of good meaning, and as an indication that I am on the road to be better inspired.

On my return I propose to call on the forsaken lady who will now have no one but Dodo to direct her steps. I wish you full happiness. I congratulate your husband, and am, ever your devoted friend,

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Leslie Stephen.

Box Hill, *Dec.* 26, 1887.

My dear Mrs. Leslie,—The portrait of Lowell is admirable, though as to the eyes I do not like their expression so well as in a photograph I have. I am grateful for it. The Dearie has left her Dad. She wishes to know whether the Chief lectures next Sunday, that she may drink of his wisdom. She (and all of us) have been struck by the report of his eulogy of Walter Scott, and especially by the logical deduction, whereby the lecturer proved that as he was a great pedestrian, and first inspired by the poetry of Scott, therefore Scott must be a great poet. This is a solid gain to Criticism. We have been in need of such basis for it.

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[1] On her engagement to Captain, now Admiral Sir Edward, Fitzmaurice Inglefield, K.C.B.

Please inform him that a lady told me last week of her intention to scale the Matterhorn, had she not been obliged to nurse her husband. It has become 'quite a woman's mountain,' she said.—Most warmly yours,

George Meredith.

To Miss Meredith.

Box Hill, *Jan.* 3, 1888.

My Dearie,—Enclosed is a cheque for your expenses. Keep the Postal Order to meet your approaching bankruptcy, under the head of Assets. For where you have not any the Judge looks ill, and the Creditors, angrily enough, as is natural, take the word to themselves, and bray with fury.—I had a nice time at Parkhurst, where I met Colonel Brackenbury. Your absence was regretted by all. Met Colonel Donelly in the train back. He asked where the Miss Lawrences were. I said, at Burford. He said, Whom do they find to talk to in the country? I said, Nobody. He said, What do they do? I said, They talk. —I see them at tea this evening. Begged off dinner, to meet Sir Lewis and Lady Pelly, yesterday. Dogs all right. A brace of woodcock from Glasgow. Cook served them last night, dry and burnt, with buttery breadcrumbs, very appetizing. Give my love to Louison and Madame. I hope you will see Mr. Morison. Your Dada takes you to his heart. George Meredith.

To Miss Meredith.

Box Hill, *Jan.* 5, 1888.

My Dearie,—I see that Mr. Morley is at the Imperial Hotel, Torquay, and I have a mind to run to him. But it will not be more than a run of the mind. I have had a letter from the Admiral written on New Year's Eve, with good wishes to a Dearie. Violet has entered on her course of instruction. How behind a Dearie Girl she is! But you will not decline to look at a book now and then, will you, dear young soul of Society? Merely to turn over the leaves in company produces an impression; and if you remember one of the sentences, and can trust yourself to quote it, you get a capital reputation with your partners in the dance, whose awe of you will add to your festivity. So through life, as on a wave specially lifted for you by Tritons, until you reach the further shore without any of the fatigue we others have undergone.—All are going on well here. On Thursday next the Lawrences have a Reading and Corney Grain. What to read, is the question for Papa. He can hit on nothing. Ask Louison to find a piece for him.

Bruny and Koby in Lapinland last night, very yawny to-day. When is a Dearie's hunt to be over? She names no date.—Beautiful S. Western weather. The Admiral wants me in Paris.—Ever your loving

George Meredith.

Buszard will not send the rusks. He must have retired from business.

To Admiral Maxse.

Box Hill, *Jan.* 5, 1888.

My dear Admiral,—My mind was with you, and we talked of you at Parkhurst, on the eve of the year. You and Violet made a most happy impression on the Lewins, who look forward to strengthen the acquaintance. Charles Brackenbury was there, looking overworked. He goes for Sun somewhere at the end of the month. He knows his physician, and I wish I did. For this 'dilatation' there seems to be no remedy—unless it be, to avoid all liquids, and the pen. After a turn of writing I stir a roarful mob within, so that there is positive diversion in a cough, and a sneeze bears promise of a new chapter. Living so much alone, as I do, I am at the mercy of the haunting demonry.

I wish he could show that the stand is to be made. Morley is at the Imperial Hotel, Torquay, rapidly improving: but he has had a sharp lesson. This fearful round of public speaking drains our public men of their vitality. Wearisome to do and to read!—and those who crave to hear would be better pleased and more fitted with drum and horn. Adieu, my friend. My best wishes are always with you.—Yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To T. Hanson Lewis.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Jan.* 14, 1888.

DEAR SIR,—I have to thank you for the compliment implied in your letter to me. But it must be a predisposition of yours in my favour, that ranks me among the celebrities; for I am not one; and let me add, I entertain a dread of the honours befalling them. They, however, have the consciousness of worth which enables men to support their load. In my case, there would not be such sustainment. Believe me that I do appreciate your kind intentions.—And I am, very truly yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To George Stevenson.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Jan.* 15, 1888.

MY DEAR MR. STEVENSON,—But, O man of gifts! am I not, when I thank you for them, imperilling your stability with the temptation to believe that you have directed them wisely? It is true, I did consume the brace of woodcock relishingly, and admired the unique of her sex adorned by dependent Loves. They moved me to an almost lyrical outburst, which nothing could have restrained in one so bodily and spiritually plumped save a sense that it was bad for you to know at once how well you had hit your mark. There, reads not that a fine silken weaving of the phrase of thanks? Yet it is none the less cordially sincere, honest John Bull's gargle in his throat not more so. Especially the dear face framed by her husband's Cupids delighted us. Riette is at her feet, embracing her knees. She has now a Governess, boasting pure descent from the head of the MacGregors, a nice person into the bargain. We get on well. I have been at Parkhurst, on the heights of Leith Hill, with Col. Lewin,[1] a retired Indian Officer, to meet my old friend, Col. Charles Brackenbury, with whom I discussed the defenceless condition of the country, and how we exist on sufferance—as previously proclaimed in some published lines of mine to him. And so we may talk, and nothing but a shock to shatter it will make the country wakeful and forethoughtful.—Yesterday I had a startler myself, in the shape of a Draft on Baring's from the publishers of my works in Boston U.S.A. by way of Royalty. Honour to that Republic! I had heard of large sales over there, and a man of experience wrote, through the publishers, to tell me it is nothing to what it will be. But I confess the touch of American money has impressed me with concrete ideas of fame.—I have not been writing much. I must soon be doing, or the trick will quit me. Without placing myself high—or anywhere,—I am, I moan to think, disdainful of an English public, and am beset by the devils of satire when I look on it. That is not a good state for composition, although I have pressing matter, many themes to work out before I take the flight. It will inspire me to know that I have readers like you and your wife. Riette presents you both her homage, and I am warmly, your faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Author of *A Fly on the Wheel, Handbook of the Tibetan Language*, etc.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

BOX HILL, *Jan.* 23, 1888.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I come to town on Wednesday—Lady Lawrence gives me shelter. Do not think of inviting me to dinner unless you have a marked wish that way. An hour with you will greatly please me. On Wednesday or Thursday I drive up to see St. B., if he can let me in. He may have misinterpreted my long absence, but when I saw him last he said expressly that he would write for me to come—and I fall too easily into the notion of my not being wanted. I live with my friends though I be invisible. Dillon yesterday told me you still bear signs of a heavy blow—as it must have been. But I am very apprehensive regarding the round of dinners and speeches in Ireland. There should be full rest of another six weeks. I could cry out for Andrew Clark's interdict. Let me know the hour most agreeable to you on Wednesday next.—Ever your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. J. E. H. Gordon.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Feb.* 13, 1888.

MY DEAR MRS. JIM,—I would have asked for a postponement of a week, as I have a volume in hand, and I dread your finding my attention incessantly fixed on it, like a juggler's eyes on the ball he tosses and catches. But on the whole it is better for me to feel myself due, and I shall have great pleasure in seeing Pixholme and Elvaston when I come to you, besides the domestic pleasures. I will not petition to delay it, and will name Monday the 26th, as you kindly give me the choice.

Your servant, admirer and friend begs you to receive the assurance of his perfect fidelity, signing himself

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To George Stevenson.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Feb.* 21, 1888.

DEAR MR. STEVENSON,—We thank you for the woodcocks, which flew through the kitchen and passed into us, clapping wing. But now let me warn you to beware of overfeeding poets. Perhaps you know what it is to pamper the Oracle. Delphi when poor is popularly intelligible. But Delphi rich has to be interpreted ; and the learned are called in, and may wrangle. They snap. I fear thatI shall soon be delivering brief sentences, Orphic articulations, enigmas to dismay not merely pundits, but put division between the legitimately and amorously united—Yea, cause the flying asunder of husband and wife. This I dread upon the arrival of each brace of woodcock, and in consequence I guard myself at the pen's point, to express me as plainly as may be. Remember always that I side with your wife's expounding of my utterances. Go under that yoke.

Any friend or relative of you two is welcome to me and my services. Ask the gentleman to visit me if he thinks I can serve him. I should like to have a word of his intention in advance. This day our barbarians of the household have had 'words' together, and the Cook notifies her departure. It is a cottage on quicksands. The Cook is not worse than the ordinary kitchen-fiend of these isles, and so we rather regret her going. However, Mr. Muirhead shall have a Box Hill dinner.—I salute the dear lady, and am cordially yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. J. B. Gilman.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 16, 1888.

Dear Madam,—I have at last obtained a copy of the collection of Poems under the title 'Modern Love,' and, together with the 'Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth,' I forward it to Messrs. Roberts, who will doubtless hand it on to you, for the work you have undertaken. Whatever may be thought of a writer's verse, it is one of his methods of relieving himself of the burden within him. But as to that work of yours, I speak honestly in saying I could wish you were more worthily engaged. Over here I have not encouraged the collecting of extracts from my books. A gathering of 'all plums,' if such they be, is not digestible. I doubt that good comes of it either to the author or the reader. Many of the excerpts can hardly be intelligible without the context. However, I would not, were it in my power, impose obstacles to Messrs. Roberts' wishes, as they have behaved well to me; and they being practical men of business, must have calculated at least that one object will be gained. As to the origin and signification of my work, I have not time to write. If I had the honour of your company here, or were sitting in Concord, I might be led to talk of myself. If a man's work is to be of value, the best of him must be in it. I have written always with the perception that there is no life but of the spirit; that the concrete is really the shadowy; yet that the way to spiritual life lies in the complete unfolding of the creature, not in the nipping of his passions. An outrage to Nature helps to extinguish his light. To the flourishing of the spirit, then, through the healthy exercise of the senses. These are simple truisms. But of such are the borderways of the path of wisdom.—Believe me, dear madam,

George Meredith.

To Miss Meredith.

Box Hill, *April* 8, 1888.

My Dearie,—Please let me know when you mean to bring back the keys of the cupboards. We get on, as you have imagined, capitally without them, but are accustomed to use them, and like the jingle. Probably you have put back the MacGregor for a day or two—or any other clock that talks against a maiden's wishes.—Bruny raised howls from Pinehurst garden last night. Mary and I paraded with lantern, found him, and released. Mary snuggled him under her shawl, dropped him at the Chalet door. He pitied his poor foot, but told it that it limped in the holy cause of lapins. He is well to-day.

A letter from Will. Have you ever had a letter from Will? This is one like that one. There is mention of the weather, and he will fish, and he will sketch. . . .—Your own Papa, George M.

To Mrs. Leslie Stephen.

Box Hill, *April* 8, 1888.

Dear Mrs. Leslie,—The Dearie tells me you look for our Admiral's address. It is 174 Boulevard St. Germain.

He comes over to England on Monday, for a week, and wishes me to return with him, which I may do or not. One incentive would be the chance of seeing the Etonian Gerald on the Parisian Boulevards. His presence there is an instance of the fitness of things, as is the loud note of the Chief of Tramps for watch dog of the Philistines. Tell him—who mysteriously allured and beguiled the fairest of her time—that the New Song at the Music Halls,—

. . . None but the Fools,
None but the Fools shall have the Fair,

is dedicated to him. I bequeath his name to posterity as cause of the empty tenancy of the craniums of the generations following him.

And let him know that a certain unveracious tone in his letter of recantation in the 'Reflector'[1] has been interpreted as the condition of a man pulled both ways—by the desire to earn his Philistine's fees, and the idea that if he does he is logically a divorced one: unless he should swear himself no man of Genius, and point, for proof, to his Lecture and his Letter.—I trust your darlings, who are mine too, go on well. My love to them.—Yours most faithfully,

George Meredith.

To Edmund Gosse.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 14, 1888.

Dear Mr. Gosse,—I have to deny myself the pleasure you have offered. At this blooming of the year, my friends come down to pluck me as a cowslip; our little bandbox of a cot is always full; on the Sunday no parson more congregationally engaged—perhaps because of the vacancy of my pulpit. We leave to Nature to preach.

I wish you were among us to see the young beech-leaves opening on a background of yews or firs. Bear in mind that you are some day due to us.—Yours very truly,

George Meredith.

To Edmund Gosse.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 17, 1888.

Dear Mr. Gosse,—My letter will have been forwarded to you. But I must write to join hands with you under this affliction.

I have looked through the black door of recent years, and although I could not then have taken consolation from any phrases in my ear, I should have reflected, and perhaps have got some strength, if one had told me that it is only the senses which are hurt by a facing of death or the wrestle with him for our beloved.

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[1] A periodical, which lived but for a short time, owned, edited, and largely contributed to by Leslie Stephen's brilliant nephew, J. K. Stephen.

What we have of better and above then comes out of it the nobler. I remember reading a sonnet of yours, on a dream of the Loss. It spoke the anguish well. But our final thought shall be that we have souls to master pain and fear. Death, the visible feeder of life, should be our familiar. I have him on my left hand, and am, not inconveniently, at home with him. To feel this is to be near upon touch of the key of wisdom—but for the wisest of reasons, it is only good in the white heat of our trial to have it in the grasp.

For me, who am not at present being tried, there is danger of its leading to cold philosophy. Not so in your case. I trust to the best that may be wished for you, and am, faithfully yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To W. E. Henley.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *June* 1, 1888.

DEAR MR. HENLEY,—The rude realism of your verses 'In Hospital' has braced me. And with this breath of the darkness of life you give a note—

'Out of the night that covers me'—

which has a manful ring to clear and lift us, whatever the oppression that may have been caused. No realism frightens me. At its worst, I take it as a correction of the flimsy, to which our literature has a constant tendency to recur. Even the lowest appears to me more instructive than Byronics.—But when, out of hospital, you cry out in ecstasy of the 'smell of the mud in the nostrils,' you strike profoundly—beyond the critical senses.

I thank you for the volume. It has the tone of a voice in the ear—as near to life as that. You have not aimed at higher. Do so in your next effort. Meanwhile the present is a distinct achievement, beyond the powers of most.—Yours very truly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

I hear of our dear Stevenson's grasp of better health very gladly and hopefully.

To H. S. Salt.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *June* 1, 1888.

DEAR SIR,—I had two or three letters from James Thomson, and I wish I had preserved them. They must have gone to collectors of autographs, and to whom I do not know. I remember that Thomson's letters remained on my writing-table a long while. I had full admiration of his nature and his powers. Few men have been endowed with so brave a heart. He did me the honour to visit me twice, when I was unaware of the extent of the tragic affliction overclouding him, but could see that he was badly weighted. I have now the conviction that the taking away of poverty from his burdens would in all likelihood have saved him, to enrich our literature; for his verse was a pure well. He had, almost past example in my experience, the thrill of the worship of valiancy as well as of sensuous beauty; his narrative poem Om El Bonain stands to witness what great things he would have done in the exhibition of nobility at war with evil conditions.

We discussed these themes at our late interview.—Yours very truly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To H. S. Salt.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *June* 5, 1888.

DEAR SIR,—Any remarks of mine, which do honour to J. Thomson, are at your disposal.

He probably had, as most of us have had, his heavy suffering on the soft side. But he inherited the tendency to the thing which slew him. And it is my opinion that, in consideration of his high and singularly elective mind, he might have worked clear of it to throw it off if circumstances had been smoother and brighter about him. For then he would have been saved from drudgery, have had time to labour at conceptions that needed time for the maturing and definition even before the evolvement of them. He would have had what was also much needed in his case, a more spacious home, a more companioned life, more than merely visiting friends—good and true to him though they were. A domestic centre of any gracious kind would have sheathed his over active sensational imaginativeness, to give it rest, and enable him to feel the delight of drawing it forth bright and keen of edge.

We will hope for a better fate to befall men of genius. Nothing is to be said against the public in his case. But I could wish that there were some Fund for the endowing of our wide Literary University with means of aid to young authors who have put forth flowers of promise, as Thomson did when he was yet to be rescued.—Faithfully yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To W. M. Meredith.

BOX HILL, *June* 18, 1888.

MY DEAR WILL,—Your propositions wait upon Riette, and I am willing to take the holiday when we may be near you, whatever the loss. But I dare say you can hit on a spot promising stout good air. Riette wishes for sea-bathing of good quality on safe sands, with no drag out. What I wish for, is high land. It might be combined by proximity to a Rail Station within half an hour of a sea-side bathing-place. As to house, I want a cottage with four best bedrooms, 2 sitting-rooms, cook and housemaid. We might do with 3 bedrooms.—You are unlikely to know of such a house. It would be as well to apply to a Carmarthen house agent at once. I suppose we should be ready to come about the 15th or 20th of July. Let me hear.

What is this that Harry Stephen proclaims of a grand surprise you have for us ?

Riette says she has written of our gathering on Sunday ; also of the visit to Ightham Mote—a place that would bewitch you. I had a revival of my youth in your description of your walk over the Welsh hills. The sketches are effective and aid the tale.—Your loving father,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

On the 2nd July I dine with Haldane and Asquith at the Blue Posts, sitting between A. Balfour and J. Morley ! ! !

To George Stevenson.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *June* 27, 1888.

DEAR MR. STEVENSON,—I have a son in South Wales, where he will remain till the Autumn. Now this fellow, as he will be unable to come to Scotland, begs me to bring Riette in his direction ; either to Tenby or the Gower district. It is not a prospect of pleasure to me, but I have learned to shut my eyes. Riette, who would rather fly North (I believe it is for reasons connected with one dear to you), wishes also that her brother may have the chance of being near us. And so I have had to commission him, and expect to hear of a house—all against inclination ; and I doubt that I shall get the bracing I require. We have many and desperate regrets, but our introduction is only postponed.—I remember when annually the end of summer was a time of joyful flight, for which I had been trimming and aiming weeks beforehand. Now I am a father—a secondary being. And you who proudly dandle the babe in the photograph, how will you look (we acknowledge a present likeness) when that babe could about do the same for you?—Perhaps I shall never see your Land o' Cakes. The outlook is under a rain-cloud. Yet I may try a dash in September to Sutherland, where a friend at Tongue near Lairg rents ducal shootings. If so we may meet. In haste and grief.—Yours,

George M.

To Miss Ethel Jones.

Box Hill, *June* 27, 1888.

My dear Ethel,—No NEWS can astonish a Seer, however big it be: and that I am one you will now readily own. As on a mountain height, I saw this Junction Line running away from the Parent rails from the first: that is, about when the soup plates were giving way to fish, and some one looked up at a good-looking sort of lad, and looked down again, having seen herself detected. On the whole, you behaved admirably when here, considering the huge burden on your mind. Now and then your eyes ran into a corner, as though to see that your treasure was safe, but they came out again, and you went through all the outward performance with discretion and sweetness, literally slaving for me at the Piano. How if you had known that I was gazing behind the curtain all the time? Well, you would only have had to think that it was your warm friend who gazed, and who, the more he sees and knows, may the better be able to serve you. George Meredith.

To Mrs. Leslie Stephen.

Box Hill, *June* 27, 1888.

Dear Mrs. Leslie,—It seems too certain that I shall not see you before you start; but at least I am made tolerably easy about the Chief's condition by the trumpet announcing his great Dinner to his flock of Cranium tramps to-night. Let St. Ives unyoke him and cut him loose from that huge waggon of the Biography of the microscopically distinguishable from the ordinary Bully imbeciles.—We are glad to note that a grateful Tory Government has not allowed the departure of the Reflector for his congenial Shades to check the recognition of his merits in life. The infant fought for them with resolute little fists, pretty to see, though perhaps shortening its term thereby; and it died an infant, but with a Hercules cock of the eye. I trust it is thought to be satisfactorily rewarded. A young Toryism that is not so would appear too ludicrous.

I think of you much and warmly.

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Frederick Jones.

Box Hill, *Sept.* 17, 1888.

My dear Mrs. Jones,—A date of sadness to me!—I think that Riette and her friend Louison were pleased with their month among the Innumerable Joneses—every second person a Jones! Wives have to cast anchor on a mole spot or other of the husband, to make sure of him amid the host. Yours would sink in the trough of them, to be detected, by the savour of his old pun.—We were at Tenby for 17 days, and had Cole down, who caught a big conger; we drove to ancient castles and sea-fowl rocks, bathed, surfeited on cream, became green as Neptune, and were alternate days drenched. Thence to

Llanelly. Next day to Llandilo, on the Towy: drives to castles and waterfalls, drenchings. Thence to Llandrindod, thence to Brecon; and Riette would walk over the Brecon Beacon, and has a sick ankle in consequence. All was wound up by a descent of the Ferndale colliery; the master of the mine and the manager accompanying. It is rather more than a quarter of a mile deep, and we were 14 seconds in the down and the up. Both girls behaved gallantly. Will had the look of a half-washed blackamoor. Warm baths were provided for us, and restored us to a seeming of the white man.

As for me, I went through a term of extreme probation. We were at hotels in all the places, and it was English hotel cookery. Rain usually at night, walks not possible except in penitence. No places of amusement. I had in desperation to go to bed at half-past nine, and scientifically dawdle, do massage, pugilism—right, left, as at Jones's pun, to reach ten o'clock before I jumped in. Not a chair gave repose for reading or writing. However, I saw pretty sea-side, noble rocks, briny birds, fair vales, Baronial this and that, mountains and Welsh eyes: also I learnt some Welsh. Love to Jones and the ladies. When he is up to the mark of me I hope to be able to come. . . . My opinion is—that Jones's Toryism has never agreed with him. For proof, when I—incarnate Radicalism—was with him it was highly beneficial.—Believe me, most truly yours, GEORGE M.

To Miss Price (Mrs. Louie Frankland).

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Nov.* 2, 1888.

DEAR MISS PRICE,—It can do no harm for you to be told that your communication to me gives pleasure. Women who read my books have much to surmount in the style, and when they have mastered it and come to the taste, I am well assured of their having discovered in me one who is much at heart with them. I have this feeling for women, because, what with nature and the world, they are the most heavily burdened. I can foresee great and blessed changes for the race when they have achieved independence ; for that must come of the exercise of their minds—the necessity for which is induced by their reliance on themselves for subsistence. Thus they will work out their problem. I suppose you to be Welsh. I draw my blood mainly from the Cymric, and can understand enthusiasm.—Very truly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. George Stevenson.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Jan.* 4, 1889.

DEAR MRS. STEVENSON,—Those who know me, and that they have my regard, are aware that I hold them more fervently in mind when I continue indebted to them for a letter. I have been writing replies to the welcome one ever since the close of October—with occupied hands. Americans are good enough to impose on me the necessity of answering many epistles of length ; and now my work of composition, though the head is clear enough, groans under a labouring system. I can rarely get an hour that will spare my conscience for the pleasure of correspondence.

My Riette and I will look forward—and your promise helps penetrate the fog about us daily—in glad hopefulness to receive you in the Spring. Let it be decided that you come. We will not—dare not, perhaps—think of our resources for amusing you ; we are sure of your charitableness to good efforts.—I send you copy of a book of verse of mine just issued. It contains a great deal of my philosophy of life. You will not be troubled by notices of it in the press.

Tell your lord—the illustrious Duellist of Bordeaux, whose marvellous conquest of the Gaul I would celebrate in Old Scotland's honour, were I of that honourable and inspiring blood—that his letter remains with me in mind; and tell him, I beg, that another will be welcome. By the way, 'Scottish Folk?' Have I not said of them always, that they and the Northern English have been the saving of the country? But now we are in a close race with various and shrewd nations—men who know what is gained by being methodical, by forethoughtfulness, by provident system.—Do you see any of it in England? When the English are beaten in things material—and I do not underrate them,—what is left? Their morality, they will say. But contemplate it! A sourness cannot be spiritual; and this, in its history and its aspect, is deadly sour. One would rather see them at their beef—whilst it lasts for them! However, I do soundly love to hear a patriotic quireing of the young eyed cherubim, and would rather your voice above men with me.—I trust the brave boy flourishes, and am your devoted GEORGE M.

Arthur Meredith's health was now broken and a voyage to Australia in prospect. A proud, reserved nature stood in the way of his making many friendships. He had a small income of his own, and never accepted help even from his father.

To Mrs. Edith Clarke.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Feb.* 8, 1889.

MY DEAR EDITH,—Please read and meditate on this before you speak of it to Arthur. I want you to use your influence in getting him to accept this little sum in part payment of his voyage. Tell him it will be the one pleasure left to me when I think of his going. It may not help much—and yet there is the chance. As I sat chattering yesterday afternoon and noticed how frail he looked, I was pained with apprehension. He may find on the voyage to and fro, that a rather broader margin for expenses will spare some financial reckoning and add to necessary comforts. Tell him that I now receive money from America—and there is promise of increase. And I live so simply that without additions to income I could well afford myself this one pleasure. He will not deny it if he thinks. I apply to you for an aid that must needs be powerful with him ; I am sure you are rational ; you have been sister and mother to him, you will induce him not to reject from his father what may prove serviceable. As for money—how poor a thing it is ! I never put a value on it even in extreme poverty. He has an honourable pride relating to it ; touch his heart, that he may not let his pride oppose my happiness—as far as I may have it from such a source as money.

I hope to see him again if possible. Beg him to keep from writing long letters on board ; but simply to read and doze. I shall hope to have just a notification from time to time of his health and good heart in the excursion.—He will use prudence when he lands, as to over exertion and acceptance of invitations. For if the voyage should do him the service one hopes from it, there is the temptation.—Your faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Frederick Jones.[1]

BOX HILL, *Feb.* 23, 1889.

DEAR FRIEND,—The blow comes on me this day. All my heart is with you. I had no black anticipation, though I felt anxiety.—Now my hope is that you may have strength. In the soul of true love there is no parting. Our dearest go from touch and sight—not, nor ever, from the lastingly vital of us. I say this, with full consciousness of the loss I too have sustained. Riette and Will are in town. They will be stricken hardly less than I.

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[1] On the death of Frederick Jones, his old friend and neighbour at Norbiton.

When you are able to take pen, I shall hope to hear from you. Give my love to Mabel and Ethel.—I am, most fervently and constantly yours,

George Meredith.

To G. W. Foote.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Feb.* 25, 1889.

Dear Sir,—When I hear that my little book of verse has given a touch of strength to a man like you, I feel that it has done its right work.

The word you point to in the Echo-Song is a printer's blunder for 'an.' As to 'immortal,' there should have been an accent on the initial syllable,—the stress opposing it to 'mortal,' properly 'im,' is long, the sense should make it so; in this instance the sense demands it. The word is an anti-Bacchic foot—immortal. On that I take my stand.

Your printers, by the way, in the sonnet quoted, put degree for decree.

If I speak of a life that is a lasting life, it is not meant to be the life of the senses—which is a sensual dream of the Creeds—whereon our good Mother looks her blackest. She has more forgiveness for libidinousness than for the smoking of such priest's opium. Those who do it stop their growth.

I shall look for the articles on J. Thomson. It is a curious comment on our system of reviewing that the 'Pall Mall' critic should be Oscar Wilde. So I have heard.—Ever truly yours, George Meredith.

To Mrs. George Stevenson.

1889.

Remember what a night of storm
Roused ancient battle up the braes,
Sons of the cloud and mount, a swarm
We saw descend the zig-zag ways,
Athwart where drenching vapour sailed,
And Scotia bled and Ossian wailed!

The Dearie is in London, at Parties, at Receptions, in the Park. I am alone, oddly made a mark for friends and foes, who send me hostile notices of my book—perhaps to work amendment. Cole and I have talks about you nearly every day. What we are to do is not decided. I have offered a trip to Bayreuth, where Mrs. Palmer, who would take the dear gal, has hired a château. But there is a passion for Cluny in the way.—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

What song has now Glenogle's burn,
Callandria? Does he leap his run
To swell the waters of Lochearn,
That silver oval under sun?
And shed you with the Highland rose,
Your shadow on him as he goes?

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, *Feb.* 28, 1889.

DEAREST ADMIRAL,—It has been suspected for some time that the Paris Correspondent of the P. M. Gazette was at Dunley—and we did not think it astonishing that no message came from him whilst he was at his clever concoctions.

I shall be glad of an evening with you.

The papers are so dull with the anticipated news that I will not allude to them.

Your reply to Ld. Granville is awaited.

Lewin would serve for one of your seconds.

The prophet of snow, seeing it on the ground in one blink of his eyes, and forthwith crowns his brows. In another blink the snow has gone. What of that? He was a prophet. And now he goes about gathering attestations to the thing he said.—Your loving

George M.

To Mrs. Frederick Jones.

Box Hill, *March* 13, 1889.

My dear Friend,—All yesterday I was thinking of you and your husband and old times—the stay with you, the welcoming here, the songs. I mentioned it to Riette with an intention to write, and an idea that I should hear. Your letter was no surprise this morning except as confirmation of the expected.

You are right as to my affection for him. He was one of the few true men I have known. And, my friend, these men live on in us. And more, they are the higher work of Nature, which she will not let pass away. They have the eternal in them. I do not look on death as a victory over us. Death and life are neighbours, each the cause of the other: and the Task for us, under stress of deprivation, is to take our loved ones into the mind, and commune with them spirit to spirit—so will they be wedded to us faster, closer about us, than when we had the voices and eyes.—I trust that when you have some composure, you will come to us and converse with me. Our feeling for you is not less than that for him.—God bless you, your faithful

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Edith Clarke.

BOX HILL, *April* 5, 1889.

MY DEAR EDITH,—The letter saddens and darkens me—makes me reproach myself for not stirring my apprehensions, at least so far as to entreat him to take a 1st class cabin for a long voyage. I had some forethought, but scarcely realized it enough, although I know the habits and manners of the English. They have a deal of strength, the exhibition of which is a cry to the Lord to make saints of them through the agency of heavy lickings. When I think of that poor boy with the mad inebriate in his cabin I am taken with rage. It shall be spoken of to the P. & O. But their management depends in part for dividends on the sale of liquor—just as the National Revenue does. Great Britain is on a beer-cask.—No other letter having come, he must have clung to the Ravenna—and one endeavours to have the hope that things went better. I dare not speculate, but seal up and resign myself until the 1st week of June, trusting torpidly. Adieu, I think of the bright little maid I saw at Riversdale. Riette salutes you warmly. The letter has distressed her.—Very truly yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Edith Clarke.

BOX HILL, *May* 20, 1889.

MY DEAR EDITH,—Arthur's letter should have been with you this morning. It is not so very distressing as the last, but discomforts, puts my hopes low. How I wish he had stopped at the Cape. His own desire to do so was nature's counsel, and it might well have been followed.—I am told that his dread of an Australian winter is without much basis, as it rather resembles our Spring void of East wind, and that the summer is there the most disliked. Evidently it was the residue of the African off-coast fever which lowered him and his shipmates. He will write again soon, perhaps to give us better news. Impress upon him, that he must take a 1st class on his return. He might try next winter at the Cape, and come to our succeeding Summer. Adieu, I trust that your little ones are well.

To Mrs. Leslie Stephen.

Box Hill, *June* 13, 1889.

Dear Mrs. Leslie,—I hope I have done right—I can scarcely doubt it. Leslie has a double, and I have had it proclaimed that the Mrs. L. Stephen in agitation against the suffrage for women, is the wife of the False Leslie. For it would be to accuse you of the fatuousness of a Liberal Unionist, to charge the true Mrs. Leslie with this irrational obstructiveness.

The case with women resembles that of the Irish. We have played fast and loose with them, until now they are encouraged to demand what they know not how to use, but have a just right to claim. If the avenues of our professions had been thrown open to them, they might have learnt the business of the world, to be competent to help in governing. But these were closed, women were commanded to continue their reliance upon their poor attractions. Consequently, as with the Irish, they push to grasp the baguette which gives authority. And they will get it; and it will be a horrible time. But better that than present sights.

Let me add, that if you are the true Mrs. Leslie of the signature, it is a compliment to your husband more touching than credibly sincere, after his behaviour in the bog of Irish politics. This I have likewise caused to be reported. 'Enough for me that my Leslie should vote, should think.' Beautiful pasture of the Britannic wife! But the world is a moving one that will pass her by.

I send this chiefly with the hope that you will be induced to forward Leslie (the true) to me for a rest of three of four days. Here he could lie on our lawn, stroll over the woods, and always have the stimulant of opposition so good for the Stephen race,—which your tenderness (if one has to trust what is rumoured) withholds from him. Put it to him seriously to come to me and hear political and social wisdom.—Your devoted

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Leslie Stephen.

BOX HILL, *June* 17, 1889.

MY DEAR MRS. LESLIE,—

'Oft may the wretch whom tempests spare [1]
Be strangled by a single hair.'

CANDY SAMPLER.

And Leslie, safe from the whizzing dangers of his Alps, is floored by his lecture on the perils past. Then why does he not come down to this medical vale for a restoration!

The Sampler, or Scroll of the Wisdom of St. Ives, has nothing to say against that; on the contrary:—

''Tis counselled, when opinions grate
Against thine own, them cultivate,

If not adopting: they make plain
Thou art not thine own weather-vane!'

That is to say, the winds (or energetic emptiness) within thee, do not command the direction of thy soul. Leslie, like every Stephen since the old Pirate Etienne ran away with the daughter of his host, imagines his particular view of things the best. But think the learned Tramps with him at all? They think, as they see, that the ideas of an oceanic marauder have made him their mouthpiece. Still is it the old Etienne upon modern Politics and Sociology!

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[1] These lines and the following, except the last four, are quoted from a grotesque sampler which hung in the lodgings at which Meredith had stayed at St. Ives.

I wish him to come down for a few lessons. We will put off the pirate, as an old pair of spectacles, and give him new views of landlords and women. Etienne I. had a more than common portion of original man's notion of 'his own': which is accountable in one who had given his eternal salvation for it. But what I would teach Leslie is that hereditary opinions of 'our own' are just ones only in the pirate times. He is being moved by the reprobate old Granddad as a wooden chessman. And the worst of it is (to quote the Sampler):—

'When wrong we go we rarely heed
That we the priceless may mislead.'

It is not merely a doddered Etienne, but a blooming Julia Stephen, whom we miss upon the road that meets the MORN.

So, for his, and for your sake:—

'An Angel, be ye ne'er in doubt,
Though lean below, above is stout;
And let her wax all eyes t' appal,
It proves her more angelical.'

Meaning that the lean are in the probationary state. Still an angel may join the wrong side, as, alas! the records of Paradise Lost attest:—But for all sakes, Leslie should come and have some of the Green of Box Hill before he resumes the grey of St. Ives. A long idle succession of noons on sward; a stroll; a talk; a wrangle; consciousness of some effect ensuing; questionings;

enlightenment: that is the permeation of Wisdom at last! And no merit claimed by me. Simply a chasing of the Old Man out of him.—To-day Cole put a netting over promising strawberries. I do hope they will ripen and induce you all, Thoby, Ginia, Nessa, the Angel, to come and fetch Leslie before you go. Is there a chance?—Cole we send to Paris for a week.—I rather fancy Ilfracombe or North Wales.—Most devotedly yours,

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Leslie Stephen.

Box Hill, Dorking, *June* 19, 1889.

My dear Mrs. Leslie,—He confesses it! 'Upon the Rails.' With the most pitiful air of ingenuous vanity, he states himself to be in the posture 'sitting upon the Rails.' For a proof of his condition, he invites me to do likewise! And when we see the poor Admiral, who does the same, with one leg a Liberal in France, t' other a Tory in England; and the Chief's Lieutenant, for nausea of the League, discharging a herd of teeth down the Embankment! All these Liberal Unionists come to a like end.—I have not been understood. In pressing Leslie to visit Box Hill, I wished to prepare him for what he will think the faithless Cornish spirit. All Cornwall has gone over to the G. O. M.—It is one of the facts. And because there is no other who presents a palpable scheme. And if Leslie, instead of building his melancholy monument of padded portliness to the pride of the English, had sacrificed a few unknown Smiths and Robinsons to run hither to me, I would have given him philosophy to get him well out of an abhorred experience, and he would then have had a fortifying holiday.

O, but you have a self-willed mate!—All the more reason for loving you.—I have better accounts of Arthur. —Your ever faithful George Meredith.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, *June* 24, 1889.

DEAREST ADMIRAL,—. . . I am reminded that I go to the Lewins on Saturday for Sunday. Come and see them and Flora Shaw—to know whom is to look through an Eyelet on the promised Land. She wrote the Pall Mall Correspondence from Cairo, admirable for knowledge of affairs and balance. This was merely the studious observation of things about her. In matters of abstract thought as well as in warm feeling for the poor muddy fry of this world, you will find her unmatched. She is Irish and French—that 's why. Quite as delightful to talk with as to look at; with more of the solid Permanency to carry away with you after it, and no bucks headed by a Porker Prince to ride you down in competition.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Augustus Jessopp.

BOX HILL, *July* 1, 1889.

MY DEAR MRS. JESSOPP,—Further prove your kind thought of me, and urge the Rev. Dr. to bring you hither, so that we take up the skein of the old days. I have a warm longing to see you both. My work (I cannot go at it for a certainty continuously, as in other times) holds me to it with rigour; and I have much to say; and my time on the surface of our sphere is short. I can rarely get away for shortest excursions. Believe me, with leisure winking at inclination, I should otherwise have run to you long ago. But I know that the dissipations and cajoleries of London have at this bright season their power upon the Doctor, and that occasionally you deign accompanying him. Believe yourself to be giving happiness to one who has never had excess of it, and you will decide to visit me.—Your ever faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

The last news from Arthur at Sydney told of revival, grand appetite, and pleasure in life.

To Mrs. Janet Ross.

BOX HILL, DORKING,
ENGLAND, *Sept.* 20, 1889.

MY DEAR JANET,—Rusée that you are! Do you think I would undertake such a responsibility as to direct your acting counter to the entreaties of your almost breathless friends?—Or believe that Janet would be seriously influenced by this one's turn of mind on the subject? But still the pretty curtsey you perform is agreeable to an oldster. No one knows better than I, that you are the most faithful of souls to old acquaintanceship. Tell anecdotes of the past groups, if you like. Make yourself as little prominent as you can. It is the kind of book done by volatile German ladies. You will be discreeter, and yet the book must necessarily be of that kind of skeleton-cupboard and desk-drawer prattle; the artless prattler archly appealing to a gracious audience and picking up her conquests. She becomes a figurante.—I have no doubt you will do the work well, but you will certainly be showing various portraits of Janet in different lights, and though you may enchant the critics, there is a public opinion in the background.—You can truly, we cannot, fill the vacancy left by dear Tom.

All my thanks to you for the invitation. Some spring day I hope to make my bow to you in Florence. Health only middling, and hard at work. Why do I work! I am not obliged, and might survey mankind from the top of Fiesole. But the habit is on me. I have besides things to say which friends would forget.—Arthur is in Sydney,

and in better condition, after a horrible voyage out. I think he goes on to New Zealand.—Ever affectionately your friend,
George Meredith.

To Edmund Gosse.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Nov.* 17, 1889.

Dear Mr. Gosse,—I decline many invitations to come up to the footlights. I dislike the station. It is good to leave it to the younger champions.

I am besides hopeless of our public. The English have hardened me outside, and there has been a consequent process within. I do my work to the best of my ability, expecting the small result for the same, which I get.

Since I began to publish, I have seen no varying in our public. My first novel dealt with your question. It was, I heard, denounced over the country by clergymen, at book-clubs, and it fell dead. They have since had their drenching of the abominable—as all do, who stand against the plea for the painting of what is natural to us. It may be shown recurring through literary history.

There seems to me good hope of the Americans. But I have no time to address them out of my books.—Overlook my non-compliance and believe me, very truly yours,
George Meredith.

To Frederick Greenwood.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Jan.* 1, 1890.

Dearest Greenwood,—My heart to you! warm wishes that you may always have scope for your powers. As to me, there seems a chance in America, where perhaps I may come to my end—not among our good English, to whom I am odious and nauseous (I quote them). Yesterday I was at Browning's funeral. I thought in the Abbey of what Juvenal walking with Umbritius says of the old fountain, 'Quanto prestantius esset numen aquae etc.,' but I applied it to the grave. Sweeter the green grass turf than Abbey pavements. But the noble poet was deeply with his fellows, and it may be appropriate that he should lie among them, in hearing of the roar. And how truly could he answer—What matter where!

I never thought of looking at the book at the Club. I will write to friends. If there seems a doubt of Barrie's election, I will journey. But oh my work has hold of me, and a day lost is a dropping of blood. Would it be out of rule and blushless for me to write to the Committee? The election of Barrie honours the Club.—Yours ever,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Frederick Greenwood.

BOX HILL, *Jan.* 28, 1890.

MY DEAR GREENWOOD,—I hope Barrie is in all right. I wrote to the Secretary, requesting him to lay my letter, with the excuses, before Committee,[1] said as much as man could.

Here is the Cod and Lobster question again! Do impress upon your pudding-headed English, that if they want security for peace, they must get into the habit of settling questions instead of shuffling them on to the next Party in office, or generation.

They do not seem to know that the holder of vast possessions must have the mind active in forecasts or else the national body ready to fight on to-morrow's new and startling combination of circumstances.—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Election Committee of the Garrick Club.

To Sidney Lysaght.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 27, 1890.

Dear Mr. Lysaght,—I hope that you will come, and will decide to rest a while at my cottage, which, if you can consent to be very small, will just hold you. We will then arrange for a visit to Admiral Maxse up on his heights of Dunley. He goes to town with the branded flocks of the fashionable after Easter. Let me know soon. I mentioned your name to my daughter. She at once exclaimed, 'Pilgrim!'[1]—so powerfully had she been impressed by Pilgrim's unequalled readiness for the sermon—as indeed all maidens would be. I have often wondered whether you might be shapeing portable statuary[2] out of that grand block. And to be flatly serious, desireing to hear of you in literature. Please tell me that you are coming.—Truly yours,

George Meredith.

In the spring of 1890 Arthur Meredith returned to England and died at the home of his sister at Woking.

To Mrs. Edith Clarke.

Box Hill, *Sept.* 5, 1890.

My dear Edith,—Will is urgent to keep me away, as the long standing injures me, and I am at the moment oppressed. But I shall come if I feel better to-morrow. Woking is a place where I could wish to lie. Lady Caroline Maxse is there and Fitzhardinge her son, and perhaps the admiral will choose it. The where is, however, a small matter. Spirit lives. I am relieved by your report of Arthur's end. To him it was, one has to

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[1] 'Pilgrim' was a familiar name Meredith gave Mr. Lysaght after a character in his first book of verses—a young man who amused him by his readiness to preach on all occasions.

[2] Mr. Lysaght had spoken of poetry as 'the sculpture of thought.'

say in the grief of things, a release. He has been, at least, rich above most in the two most devoted of friends, his sister and her husband. Until my breath goes I shall bless you both.—As to the terms of the Will, they are fully in accord with what I should have proposed. Will and Riette have seen your letter and warmly think the same. They will each have as much money as young ones need to have—under our present barbaric system. Know that if you do not see me to-morrow, there is physical obstacle. Believe me, that my heart is always with you both and with your little ones.—Affectionately ever,
GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Rt. Hon. John Morley.

BOX HILL, *Sept.* 9, 1890.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—His latest was peaceful. But he had suffered for years. He bore the trial bravely.

I pass into the shades of dear ones, and have to question myself of the kind of lamp I have trimmed to light me. With all the dues to life, I am ready for my day of darkness.

When in the Highlands I heard of you, as at Cluny, and of your wife, who is ever my dear friend, that she was very ill—or had been. It was among my good intentions to write for news of her. I talked of her to Riette, and spoke of her marvellous power of recovery. It seems again to be the mountain air, which has revived her. How that brings old Patterdale to mind!

I do not see you, but I live much with you, often I summon your spirit and we hold colloquies. I will one day propose myself for an evening in the flesh. If you and your mountaineer are ever of a mind for a day or two here, I have quarters at the inn.—Riette sends love to you all. Take mine.—I am yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John R. Rees.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Sept.* 12, 1890.

Dear Sir,—The reading of your little book has given me pleasure. It is a surprise to me to see verses of mine attracting notice, and discussed. Our critics have usually a distaste for that which has not won the public, but I cannot agree with you in your generous remarks on my first volume. The sole excuse for it, in my mind, is the crude age of the writer. But that does not make it more comfortable to think that the book is not extinct. Five volumes have been printed. I no longer send copies for review. If you have not 'A Reading of Earth,' I will direct that a copy be forwarded to you.—Very truly yours,

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Edith Clarke.

Box Hill, *Jan.* 21, 1891.

My dear Edith,—I have not thanked you for the books. I had intended to write, asking but for one, with Arthur's name in it. The collection speaks piteously.—You will not think me ungrateful. I have so much of writing to do, that letters are postponed until I get a bad repute with friends, of whom, as of you and your tender-hearted husband and dear little ones, I think often. Some day when I come to town I will diverge from Victoria Station to call on you. Will says you have overworked. Beware of a prolonged strain. Holiday now and then is the saving of those in harness. Give my kindest greetings to all about you.—Warmly yours,

George Meredith.

To H. S. Salt.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Feb.* 2, 1891.

Dear Sir,—Apologies are poor stuff. I have to say, that I was very unwell when your letter came. Of course

I could have replied : but the burden of it was a request, imposing a decision ; and I had not the heart to refuse or comply. So much for my discourtesy. I beg you will overlook it. I am in fact jaded and broken. I have gone through James Thomson's works, to spur myself. He was a man of big heart, of such entire sincereness that he wrote directly from the impressions carved in him by his desolate experience of life. Nothing is feigned, all is positive. No Inferno could be darker. But the poetical effect of a greater part of the Poems is that of a litany of the vaults below. The task of a preface would be to show him pursued and precipitated by his malady in the blood to do this poetical offence of dark monotonousness, which the clear soul of the man would have been far from committing had he not been so driven—as the beautiful Om-el-Bonain may witness. Bright achievement was plucked out of the most tragic life in our literature. Still I find that to expound him rightly, doing justice to him, with satisfaction to his admirers—to show how the noble qualities of the man, harried, though never more than physically conquered, at times by the Fury he inherited, affected his verse, making it record the gloomy imagery absolutely conceived by him,—this is more than I can undertake. My health is of a pale sort at present. Now and then I have had in me jet of an endeavour to hit the delicate balance which would give the just portrait of a brave good man and true poet, hapless in his birth, fighting his best, and, as the book would prove, not failing, though baffled. I cannot. Hold me excused as well as you can. . . .—Yours very truly,

George Meredith.

To Frederick Chapman.

Box Hill, *April* 22, 1891.

Dear Fred,—I am down or at best limping a yard at a stretch with an ugly sprain of the right foot. Please let me have any books you can lay hands on—The Barbizon School, Fitzgerald's Pickwick, Dixon's new book on Natural History—for I can't work and find any thinking such a process of shunting, that it jolts, and I seek refuge in the thoughts of others or where no thoughts are.

To Miss Marie Meredith.

Box Hill, *May* 12, 1891.

The Dearie will excuse her papa for not giving her more than ½ minute in her whirl of gaieties. Happily Annie has relieved us for a day: and he has put repression upon the toiling Eliza, with a refusal of every dish proposed for his dinners. But just think! we had the 3 dogs washed in turn!—and Cole's Wally caught a fledgling blackbird!—and what with this and that we are frolicsome as the article on Natural History in the Daily News. Miss D—— has taken inflammation in the foot —prudent and spinsterly. But she treats me as if it had been at the bosom, and makes it a pretext for not coming. That is irrational. All the merry-go-round at the cottage madder than ever.—Love to your host and hostess. George M.

To W. E. Henley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *June* 18, 1891.

Dear Mr. Henley,—It must be to you that I am indebted for a Scots Observer, in which I see my rather battered name. I do not obtrude it often on the public, and I wish I could keep it back for good, but the devil is in me for driving me to the pen.—I am reminded of your kind offer to send your volume of criticisms. I know the contents, and I would prefer that the book should go to one ignorant of them. You can cuff lustily, but no critic more generously praises.

I rejoice in the recognition now hailing you for all your qualities.—I am, ever warmly yours,

George Meredith.

To Gilbert Farquhar.

Box Hill, Dorking, *July* 8, 1891.

My dear Gilbert of the Clan,—The row of volumes awaits like handmaids of the Sultan your selection. Get a list, open a Virgil, let the first letter of the first line you see decide your choice; then tell me, and resolve and save me the post by coming hither for the book, and bring the choicest Clubman with you, and engage him by vow to dine here.—Yours ever, George Meredith.

To Miss Marie Meredith.

Box Hill, *July* 10, 1891.

She scarce has a word for Papa,
To tell how she carolled and sported O!
So, with just, How d' ye do and Ta-ta,
She runs from her pen to be courted O!

To write were a foolish endeavour,
But, to show that her humour is still in her,
And flourishing fatter than ever,
She sends him the
Bill of her Milliner.

To Mrs. Christopher Wilson.

Box Hill, *August* 24, 1891.

My dear Mrs. Wilson,—I am held away from you by an Eye sinister as a Brocken Witch's Festival night. It would be, if I came, a meeting of Aurora and a profile of Pluto—a thing incredible—a disruption of the mythological universe. But, believe me, the moment the eye can wink its old soft nothings, I will bring it to perform on you, with the same gentle confidence in its effects. This week I hope we may drive over.—Your devoted

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Clement Shorter.

BOX HILL, *Oct.* 20, 1891.

DEAR MR. SHORTER,— . . . The 'Group of noble Dames' and Mr. W. Watson's 'Poems' are returned. The former gives time a jog. The latter has hopeful merit. I see you have enlisted his poetic pen. Were I at his elbow, I would warn him of the many anxious or even not worse than expectant watching the work of one who has been trumpeted. Each successive stroke should confirm the promise, otherwise it abates. Let him brood, and give us only of his best, as in much of the volume. So rare is good work in verse, that I have a miser's eye for it. My reprint of Modern Love is in the printers' hands. To your question, the additional piece is, 'The Sage Enamoured and the Honest Lady.' But the book will not be sent out for review. Critics have enough of me as a novelist.—Yours very faithfully,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Frederick Greenwood.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Oct.* first fog, 1891.

MY DEAR GREENWOOD,—I am glad to be remembered by you, though you heap nine years on the back of sixty-four. It is not worth while to correct an error that I can let pass, and no one else will notice. However astray this lantern of your memory, to find it illumining a thrice aged me, warms the marrow of my bones. Think of me still when the nine years have run.

I read the Anti-Jacobin, liking all of it except the title.

My domestic political views are on t' other side. But I share your feeling for the country, and am with you in your watchful outlook. Therefore I hail an extension of the Journal, that has an air of prosperity—or at least of a justified audacity. Much of the writing is excellent, in the tone of journalism which your supervision has always guaranteed. Often I wish to back an article—or remonstrate. Why do you never come to me! You promised. Send word of your resolve to keep faith. I fancy that a talk here on foreign affairs, and the clash coming, and our military inefficiency, etc., would fetch a spark or two. As to the latter, pray thump on it in the enlarged Anti-J. We may thank the seas that such an Army as our present one has not to engage Bulgaria—or Servia! Midway in the 3rd volume of Marbot's Memoirs, an instructive piece of work.—With my love to you, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Frederick Chapman.

BOX HILL, *Nov.* 3, 1891.

DEAR FRED,—Against the project of the purchase of J[ules] Simon's book is :—The large sum asked for a translation :—

The fact that it is addressed directly to the French, and touching French rather than general conditions :—

That such a subject chiefly interests cultivated persons, who prefer to read it in the original :—

That it holds a balance, and does not prick the enthusiasm of a party.

In favour :—The balance is held firmly :—

The writing is good, in some chapters rather lively, although too distended in some :—

The conservatism will commend it to our Peers, and cause favourable discussion, thus arousing interest in the public :—

The tone is altogether delicate and inoffensive. There is much good sense in it, good counsel.

New ideas—that is, a reading of the present state of things, relating to women, by the light of the past, in anticipation of the future.—I do not find J. Simon judges fairly of the women of an existing development. He does not treat of the powers they might display under better training ; and how an enlargement of their understandings must affect the great question ; nor of the contraction of their understandings caused by an exclusive devotion to maternity and domesticity ; nor of what is involved in it, as regards the advancements of the race.—Health not very good.—Yours ever,

George Meredith.

To Frederick Greenwood.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Nov.* 30, 1891.

My dear Greenwood,—Here is a twitter of song for your Anti-J., if you care to have it, just to show you my heart is warm, though I can't comply with your request, by reason of ill-health and a fit of my cross old Fairy, who condemned me from the cradle to poverty, through the love of verse. I am bringing out one volume (and beg you to read 'The Sage enamoured and the Honest Lady') and I have a vol. of Selections, and new vol. ready, and I have a story to write, and a novel to complete. With this, I am in Doctor's hands !

Pray, follow up Arnold Forster's articles. The root of our grim malady is the Head of Establishment. We fall between the Horse Guards and the War Office.—Your loving George Meredith.

To J. M. Barrie.[1]

Box Hill, *Dec.* 3, 1891.

Dear Barrie,—Our thanks are warm for 'The Little Minister.' And how I envy you!—not the deserved success of the book, but your pleasure in writing it. The conjuration of Babbie must have been an hour of enchantment. She carries us—criticism can't grow at her heels. Thrums, too, is as hot alive as ever.— I hope I may see you soon.

I am comforted in seeing that work like yours is warmly greeted by press and public.—Very faithfully,

George Meredith.

To Frederick Greenwood.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Dec.* 9, 1891.

My dear Greenwood,—Enclosed the proofs.

In last Saturday's Athenæum you will see verses which blow the trump, and hear my confession. They were written on the highroad to you. I was at the last lines when in comes Editor of Ath. from Burford, listens to verses, exclaims, waits for finale, and carries them off. He had them, because of my modesty, which was uncertain of another's (my Greenwood's) approval.

But the notion of stirring Englishmen with verse is comic. Foemen in the guts might do it. Or Brighton bombarded, or supplies of fresh meat failing. We have an inefficient navy. We have no army fit to encounter 20,000 European troops. And Invasion is an acknowledged possibility. My examination in Court went fairly. I had some fun out of Sir C. Russell. The papers have not printed all.—Ever yours,

George M.

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[1] Meredith had discerned the genius of J. M. Barrie from the first, and they early became friends.

To Sidney Lysaght.

Box Hill, *Jan.* 3, 1892.

Dear Mr. Lysaght,—Your lexiconizing is clever, and I cannot go beyond it. But I would advise you strongly to renounce all classic compounds in a novel. They puzzle readers, irritate reviewers. Even when they come spontaneously, they are suitable only to certain works of learned humourists.

I wish success to your novel, good fortune to you in all ways.—Yours ever truly, George Meredith.

To H. S. Salt.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Jan.* 5, 1892.

Dear Mr. Salt,—I have read the article. It is pleasant to be appreciated, but the chief pleasure for me is in seeing the drift of my work rightly appreciated. You will shortly receive a reprint of 'Modern Love' revised. To which is added 'The Sage Enamoured and The Honest Lady,' a piece to provoke our Social Conservative's thunder. I do not send out copies for review, for the flagellator has enough to do in dealing with me as a novelist. Otherwise I would not shun him, and I can acknowledge that here and there he strikes justly.

One fancies that a cultivated man might perceive in a writer a turn for literary playfulness, when strong human emotion is not upon him. To find this taken seriously, as an example of my 'style,' is quaint. But we will admit that there is too much of it.—Pray come and see us. February with a S. W. blowing is as good as any Spring. Your wife will, I trust, do me the honour to come with you. The cottage offers bed and dressing room.—Yours very truly, George Meredith.

To Frederick Greenwood.

Box Hill, *Jan.* 8, 1892.

My dear Greenwood,—I thought it needless when I sent the verses to say that such tiny things were a gift, honoured by your acceptance. Do not, if you print me in future, pay me. We are not on the same sides in politics, but at heart we are one. I never can help wishing well to an undertaking headed by you.

Is, then, the Anti-J. in a swim of success? This cheque insists on blowing a fine brass note, and I like it better than the money, although you pummel my poor lot of worthies and won't see things visible to me. But you do love England, where again we join. The crash with Maupassant comes from avenging Nature—heredity helping. A moderated youth would have given him life. In reality, for a man of his powers, he produced little. And already he had begun to work upon himself. I regret. He was one of the few living whom I read with satisfaction in the handling of his matter.—Ever yours,

George Meredith.

To Frederick Greenwood.

Box Hill, *Jan.* 11, 1892.

My dear Greenwood,—Hardy is one of the few men whose work I can read. I had always great hope of him. If you will lend me his Tess, it shall be returned early.—Ever yours,

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Walter Palmer.

Box Hill, *Jan.* 14, 1892.

Dear Friend,—Your Walter's letter is refreshingly a sweetened acid, for saying you are better, though still the bedded invalid. I wish I could pipe a thousand musical diversions to beguile your weariness. It is at such moments—more than any, upon my word!—or at least almost more—one feels how specially and incredibly privileged these husbands are.

Walter sits by your side, reads, administers potion, awakens gratitude, and we outsiders have and have only to thank him for making you love him more and more. Let him be warned, that when he has helped to the perfect restoration of you, our sentiments towards him must needs be the same as before, and he should know that the owner of the round world's jewel must at least fight the World's eyes for it.

When my 'Sage enamoured' is to be out, I can't say. I don't hear from the publishers. But when it is, Walter shall have it to read to you.

To Clement Shorter.

Box Hill, *Jan.* 21, 1892.

Dear Mr. Shorter,—I thank you for the paper with the article. Mr. Bernard Shaw gives me good criticism. I tried at the time of writing the book to get a portrait of Lassalle, and had so far to write in the dark. For this and corresponding reasons I put a poor estimate on the book, though it was done with honest endeavour to run with the facts.—Yours very truly,

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Walter Palmer.

Jan. 25, 1892.

Tiptoe at Box Hill we kiss fingers and wave an eternal morning salute to the beloved invalid, strangely (such is the effect of this present whirlabout which lays her on the couch) comforted by Walter's privileged watch over her.

We trust her to him, and are as when the furnace has killed in flames, without a wish of our own beyond the steady heat of hope that this man may help to revive her and restore her to us. He is entreated for a further bulletin.

Here to-day we have a sensible sunlight, and birds beginning upon a timid, tentative amorous pipe, as did Jean's rather more than nurse, what time he first received his dart from her eyes, from her mouth, from her soul—as we, alas ! too late. But success to him, and to her all our devotion. GEORGE MEREDITH.

To George Stevenson.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Feb.* 5, 1892.

MY DEAR GLASGOWGO,—Telegram has told you : the honour [1] so generously offered could not be refused. I prefer to pay the usual fees, and beg you to let me know where I am to address myself when my new title is patent. I send a volume to the Professor to your care—and he is not to suppose that it is a thank you for friendly services. Volumes from the publishers had to be awaited. Try again at The Sage Enamoured. You will find it, when you run in the vein of the meaning, a poem with more sustenance than the one you have taken to.

I am rather better, still seedy. Is Callandria to come in May ? She will be the spirit of the month to me. My love to her and Gogo.—St. Andrew confounds my wits and makes me question what I have done to deserve her notice.—As the Lady in Modern Love, her husband never accurately knew ; therefore we ought not to inquire ; but flesh totters on the decline when irritated by anything.—Your affectionate

GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] An honorary degree at St. Andrews University.

To Leopold Salomons.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Feb.* 15, 1892.

My dear Sir,—I have to express to you my regrets that my servant should have come to loggerheads with your bailiff over the privilege you so kindly grant him. He trespassed on it in taking his brother with him to fish. They are both zealots of the rod, and as much as the two devotees who, in the French story, ventured out on the Seine at the time when Paris was begirt with Prussians, and were taken, and were yet such patriots that they would not furnish a word of the outposts to save themselves from the penalty of spies. I believe that I am the guilty person, and told my servant, when your permission was granted, that such fraternal inseparables in the craft would surely be accounted as one.

I am concerned about it, and beg your excuse.—Believe me, most truly yours, George Meredith.

To Frederick Greenwood.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Feb.* 23, 1892.

My dear Greenwood,—My daughter packs and sends you 'Tess' to-day. The work is open to criticism, but excellent and very interesting. All of the Dairy Farm held me fast. But from the moment of the meeting again of Tess and Alec, I grew cold, and should say that there is a depression of power, up to the end, save for the short scene on the plain of Stonehenge. If the author's minute method had been sustained, we should have had a finer book. It is marred by the sudden hurry to round the story. And Tess, out of the arms of Alec, into (I suppose) those of the lily necked Clare, and on to the Black Flag waving over her poor body, is a smudge in vapour—she at one time so real to me.

I have heard of your illness, with the later, better report. All goes well now, I trust. And ah! the Anti-Jacobin! You are the prince of Editors, too good for you to have a party backing you. But take the title, and stand paperless. It is written that an Editor who shows esteem for literature shall have to drop his mouthpiece and of his honesty be stricken dumb.

George Meredith.

To W. S. M'Cormick.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Feb.* 25, 1892.

My dear Professor,—I have this morning received the official notification of the honour designed for me by the Senate. I am very sensible of it. But the one drawback to my contentment is, that I am pretty sure my state of health will not allow me to claim the dignity in person; and the thought of demanding forbearance from a body of men so generous, doubles my feeling of infirmity. Such is my state, that I cannot long keep standing, small excitement fatigues. I wrote word to Glasgowgo when, through him, this decoration was first proposed to me. He sent word of attendance being a part of the ceremony waived in my case. Then, with regret to temper the joyfulness, I signified acceptance. I trust this is understood. My Doctor can make attestation.

Please let me hear whether I should reply to the official note, and whether at once, or when, and whether to put my case to the Secretary; and how to convey my sentiment of gratitude.—I know you will not mind the trouble I am inflicting.—I have a little book of verse, awaiting a dismal table of Errata, for you.—When you come to London in April, give me as much of your time as you can.—The breath of the braes will be in your appearance here.—Ever warmly yours, George Meredith.

To Sidney Colvin.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 4, 1892.

My dear Colvin,—What must you have been thinking of me! I am partly recovering from illness (not influenza). I should have found you as welcome as ever, but dared not offer myself for your host.

They have quartered me in the cot below. I will not propose to you the chalet and dog to guard. I have a room at the inn for a friend. So there, tighten your resolution and enliven me whenever you please. The look out of my window is as if one saw Nature's peeled skull. But in an hour the S.W. can give it the face of youth and show how *ver egelidus refert tepores.* The sky winks for a genial Sunday—perhaps the Saturday. I dare not prognosticate to a Londoner, who is unpardoning at a disappointment. But this week or next or anywhen, be bold, I say.—Your loving,

George Meredith.

To Theodore Watts-Dunton.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 8, 1892.

My dear Mr. Watts,—The Sonnet is pure amber for a piece of descriptive analogy that fits the poet wonderfully; and one might beat about through volumes of essays, and not so paint him. There is Coleridge. But where the source of your story—if anything of such aptness could have been other than dreamed after a draught of Xanadu, —I cannot tell.—Tell Swinburne, with my love to him, that I would not have him bothered to write. Enough if he reads work of mine.—The 'Sage Enamoured' has caused everybody to take up the old cudgel 'Obscurity' for my incorrigible nob. However, on we go. I have still a lot to say while the machine goes wheeling. But, for the comfort of the world, symptoms have come that the wheels are shakey.—I have been condemned to quit the chalet at night and sleep at the cot below. But we shall have a bed for you,—and now that I cannot much more than stroll in the garden, your visit and talk will be blessedness. I look for a S.W. April and May.—Ever warmly yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Frederick Chapman.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *March* 26, 1892.

MY DEAR FRED,—I am heartily glad that you are back. I have had tidings now and again—at one time very gloomy. Another run to the sea would do you no harm. I should have come up to greet you, but am unable to move. For the same reason I have had to get exemption from St. Andrews in April, and the Principal and Senate have been good enough to grant it.

This man Mosher of Maine sent me a copy of the book. The selling of it over here is impudent, and we might try to stop it. But why should the bother of it fall upon you? I fancy that some labour is involved in defeating these fellows, and if there is cost as well, the sale of my poetry would not cover the outlay.

The MSS. have been very bad.

Please let me know how Col. Ellis behaved in the matter of the damages you were mulcted in.[1]—Yours ever,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Colonel Sir Alfred Burdon Ellis, whose *West African Sketches* caused a libel suit to be brought against Chapman and Hall. Colonel Ellis was a younger son of General Sir S. B. Ellis, R.M.L.I., by his second marriage, General Ellis's first wife having been Catherine Meredith, daughter of Melchizedek Meredith, and therefore aunt of George Meredith.

To Mrs. Leslie Stephen.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *July* 25, 1892.

MY DEAR MRS. LESLIE,—I have been of late, like Mrs. Mark Pattison's parrot, having 'a devil of a time'; only it happened to him that he was plucked by the monkey, and I find myself next to rehabilitated by the surgeon. This was Buckston Browne, and no victim of sharp instruments could be in skilfuller or kinder hands. It happened that he had been speculating for years upon what sort of a person I was. He did his work perfectly, and I had a difficulty in getting him to take his fee. Imagine me at Haslar House, near Portland Place, for 13 days! And it was counted a rapid recovery. But I am forbidden to take long journeys for the present. Otherwise your invitation would have been very tempting. To be with you and the Chief for a week, comes to my mind like a breath of sea-air to Haslar House lungs. We thank you from the heart. Have you heard that Will is engaged to be married to Daisy Elliot of Parkhurst, Leith Hill? The event is marked for October. She is an accomplished musician (viola, piano, and voice), and an exceedingly sweet, good girl.—Our love to you all.—I am ever warmly yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

Of this trying illness and operation Mr. Buckston Browne writes:—

'I had for some years wished to see or to know Mr. George Meredith, and had often tried to imagine the personality of the author of the *Egoist* and the *Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, when one morning a letter came asking me to give him a professional appointment at my house. On June 20, 1892, Mr. Meredith plumped himself down in what has been called the victim's chair in my consulting-room. He was then sixty-four years old and ataxic, and literally threw himself into chairs or on to couches with alarming precipitancy. His first words were, " Mr. Browne, I am a writer," and I was able to say at once, " Mr. Meredith, you need no introduction here," and opening a bookcase immediately in front of him I showed him a complete edition of his works. We became great friends. He gave me his entire confidence, and although exceedingly sensitive in every possible way, he proved an excellent patient. I never had to waste my energies in combating his whims and fancies, but was able to concentrate my energies upon his special complaint, which was one of the most trying and torturing that afflict the human race—namely, stone in the bladder. I operated and removed a large stone on June 26, 1892. Owing to his ataxic condition operation was again necessary on December 30, 1895, and again in March 1899. This third operation was the last one, and he lived entirely free from stone for ten years afterwards. In December 1905 he fell and broke his leg, but made a good recovery.

'An amusing incident happened in connection with the first of my operations. Sir Frederic Hewitt was the anæsthetist. Mr. Meredith was very anxious to be perfectly unconscious before the operation was begun. " So I determined," he said, " to keep my hand moving up and down as long as I was conscious, as a warning to you. I kept moving my hand up and down until I heard the nurse say, ' Why do you not keep your hand still, Mr. Meredith ? ' I gravely replied that I did not wish Mr. Browne to begin until I was perfectly unconscious and ceased to move. ' Oh, sir,' answered the nurse, ' Mr. Browne has been gone for nearly two hours ! ! ! ' " Mr. Meredith never tired of telling this story. He made a good recovery from the operation, and set to work to finish the last of his novels that has been published. *Lord Ormont and his Aminta* appeared in June 1894, and the *Times* reviewer wrote : " Mr. George Meredith's new novel is ' gratefully inscribed to George Buckston Browne, Surgeon.' The words may remind us under what adverse conditions of health the veteran novelist writes now—conditions which make each new book a triumph of will over bodily weakness." Mr. Meredith, however, was destined to live for another fifteen years, and although I saw him in all sorts and conditions of health, his welcome was always cheery and often rollicking, and I do not remember a single frown.'

To Frederick Chapman.

Box Hill, *August* 3, 1892.

Dear Fred,—I see a foreign notice of a clever work on Socialism, 'Whither Socialism Leads,' by Eugen Richter, the chief of the Liberals in the Berlin Chamber. It has had an enormous sale in Germany. It would certainly be read here. There is a preface to a coming French Translation, by P. Leroy-Beaulieu, permission to translate which could doubtless be obtained. You will do well to consider the matter—and quickly. Williams & Norgate may have the work.—Yours ever,

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Bovill.

Box Hill, Dorking, *August* 16, 1892.

My dear Mrs. Bovill,—Wonderful to hear that there is a woman who can read of Shagpat! I suppose he does wear a sort of allegory. But it is not as a dress-suit; rather as a dressing-gown, very loosely. And they say it signifies Humbug, and its attractiveness; while Noorna is the spiritual truth. Poor Sh. Bagarag being the ball between the two. I think I once knew more about them and the meaning, but have forgotten, and am glad to forget, seeing how abused I have been for having written the book.

I was pleased to have your letter, and shall rejoice when it is my good chance to meet you again.—Your ever faithful George Meredith.

To J. M. Barrie.

Box Hill, Dorking, *August* 24, 1892.

Dear Mr. Barrie,—Shall we hear that you are coming soon? You know you are always welcome to me. On Friday we shall be at Parkhurst, Abinger Common, not very far from you, by way of Gomshall, then to the right up Felday, then sharp to the left, which leads to the common. If you call there to tea, we can drive you hither. Colonel Lewin will be glad to make your acquaintance. It is the home from which my son takes a daughter in October. The walk from Shere would not be more than 3¼ miles.—Ever warmly,

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Seymour Trower.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Oct.* 6, 1892.

My dear Mrs. Trower,—Carmencita[1] has come, to challenge, provoke, enchant me. Such a type she is, that I touch her and live the life with her, drinking agonies of jealousy, until she loses power to pose—fattens into sedativeness. But thanks to Sargent, it will be long before that happens. Of course I am grateful to the giver, and rather the more so for not expressing it other than in this blunt nod. Evidently giving makes you happy.—I have been to Reading and Loseley,[2] meeting for the first time the General, who is of an excellent American type. On the whole, I bore myself well and came away improved. Next week there is a scheme for going to see the Spanish dancer at the Empire. Mrs. W. Palmer, Admiral Maxse and I, with others perhaps.

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[1] A reproduction of the portrait of Carmencita by John S. Sargent.

[2] Loseley, near Guildford, rented at that time by the late General Palmer of Glen Eirie, Colorado.

What fun if you could arrange for a party to meet ours there! Love from Riette. Love to the Gondolier.[1]—I am ever your most faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Walter Palmer.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Oct.* 20, 1892.

Kneecap, Bentbrow, Heartthrob, salute you! Toadbelly transforms to arrowhead at thought of you!

We trust that you are not fatigued with your condescension to certain of your subjects on Wednesday night.

This is to communicate, not simply that the Admiral (who is not likely to let the communication be entrusted to another) proposes for us to see the Spanish Dancer on Wednesday next, but that we are about to inform him formally that the Princes of the Court of Queen Jean have decided, for a cement of their comity, as well as in homage to that Upper Throne whereon she sits, to rescind, revile, and grind catcries on all breathers of nonsensical sentimental amorous Flummery, such as the Admiral or Naval Cupid excels in. Upon these terms, namely, of abstention from the aforesaid, he joins the Court, or committing breach, he is deported unto whither Tilecats are in Concert, there to flummerize among them.

Also I had to speak of a book due to your Highness, as the green leaf to the Sunlight: a book of poems. But my publisher sends word that I must wait, the hundreds of bound copies being all sold out. It is good news. Yet I would not have had Queen Jean kept from her own for an hour.—My mouth to the hem of her garment,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Mr. Seymour Trower.

To Mrs. Leslie Stephen.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 25, 1892.

MY DEAR MRS. LESLIE,—You would rejoice us by coming. But I am concerned to think of the dulness here, and would propose February for you, when also poor Cole is prouder of his garden, and the journey by rail is not a probation. There must be no thought of subjecting Thoby to it. Let him send me a compliment now and come when we can amuse him a little. I have to confess that my heart is fast going to Virginia.

Watts has written a most generous offer to paint my head for the list among his gifts to the nation. It is distressing, for I could not consent to absorb any of his precious time, or to sit for such a purpose. I am ashamed to say I have no ambition to provoke an English posterity's question, Who is he? and my grizzled mug may be left to vanish. To this effect I must write. It is really painful to meet the dear and noble fellow's offer in such a manner. I thought Leslie looking well. Our heartiest to you all, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To a lady whose husband had been killed by a fall from his horse.

BOX HILL, *Feb.* 4, 1893.

DEAREST FRIEND,—My hopes and thoughts are with you. I cannot ask you to be comforted —— under such a blow the soul is on the waters and must swim of its own strength. I have faith in your strength, that is all I can say.

For me it is also a blow, and it will be to Will, and I think of the mother as well as the wife.—My condition forbids moving, or I would come to town, on the chance of two minutes. But yet at this moment you are better away, perhaps, even from friends. Know them to be with you in spirit as mine is.—Tenderly yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Sidney Lysaght.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *April* 12, 1893.

DEAR MR. LYSAGHT,—Your re-writing improved the book,[1] but it could do little for the story, because of an inorganic conception. However, the book is full of honest good things, full of promise, and you have only to work deliberately upon a plan coming from heart and brain in a nuptial union: you will surely succeed. The matter is in you. I like the spirit of your verses, and they have a fine ring. Here again I would say, tie yourself to some special theme for the present, and turn to generalizings and adjurations by and by. Preach not yet,—I am ashamed to find myself doing it.

Just home from Loseley, near G. F. Watts, to whom I have been sitting for a portrait—which, I am told, is good. But why a grizzled head is wanted for posterity to see, is the riddle to me. I dare not hint it, or I shall hear the retort that I am thinking . . . Once and in truth there was a presentable phiz, when no one cared for it.

Pray, come as soon as you can.—Ever yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Frederick Greenwood.

BOX HILL, DORKING.

MY DEAR GREENWOOD,—I ventured to send the box of the Java cigars—it has the look of a brutal reply to a mild request; but it was intended for you to try the cigars deliberately before ordering a store. If you really like them, come to me, and in the secrecy of my room, after dinner, you having proved the sincerity of your pursuit by your visit, I will confide to you where and how stores are to be obtained.

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[1] *The Marplot.*

I have so much to talk of with you, and you may find that the mute looker-on in the world can give his hints. And so you suppose I could not detect fruits of the Greenwood tree without the name of it affixed? Ay, though it were in a Suburban Gazette, a Tottenham Road Advertizer—anywhere.—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Arthur Wing Pinero.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *May* 4, 1893.

MY DEAR (I hope for the last time 'Mr.') PINERO,—The enclosed to help grace your Chairman's ample seat at the Fund Dinner.[1] None do we find so generous in charity as actors, unless it be ladies of the town—as I have heard.

Therefore your Fund commands that we be emulous of the same.—I have to go to Watts, near Guildford, to give last sittings for a portrait, on the date you mention. Success to you! will be my cry when the great night comes.[2] Excellent title to set one threading a Dramatist's maze. It must hit.—I am too busy finishing (just in the middle) a work, to go anywhere to dinner. You won't think it disrespect to a Rising Young Profession.

Please don't forget, that you and Arthur Blunt are due here to dine on a Sunday in ulterior June. As to this point, a word from you will give me repose in anticipation of pleasure.—Very truly yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] The Royal General Theatrical Fund.

[2] The first night of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray.*

To Mrs. Walter Palmer.

Box Hill, Dorking, *June* 23, 1893.

My Liege,—To-morrow is the anniversary of the Day when, some way between Cyprus, Crete and Rhodes, a light breeze descending from Olympus ruffled the sapphire sea-waters to foam and you sprang into a pearly shell new-born.

O that I could do justice to that event! I am bold enough to think I might come near it if I had time. But I am writing every day from 10.30 to 6 p.m., and am tired at the end. I hope—rather think—you will like the novel[1] for its own sake—not in your gentleness for mine.

So, then, O Rose of the month that is month of the Rose! there is a first line of a poem to be written to you of you when I am out of harness.

I long to see you. Please give my love to Walter Golfer, and know me ever and ever,

George Meredith.

To Mrs. W. M. Meredith.

Box Hill, *Oct.* 3, 1893.

My dearest Daisy,—We rejoice in your recovery, which speaks wonders for your health of blood. I would have written sooner, but am hard driven with the pen at composition. Latterly, too, writing letters about an American investment that has gone crazy. I resemble a hungry man with a mutton chop on the gridiron, and just as he thinks it ready, over it goes into the coals. The effect of turning from imaginative work to such contemplations is funny. Sir Alec[2] coming down from Denbies first informed me of your state. Then I saw Mabel[1] looking excellently well with cheeks of the October Maple. To-day Riette has gone to Loseley. The Palmers leave it till the silver question is at rest. I meet now and then a bi-metallist, but have no arguments of my own, so the fight rages over my head.—Your loving

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[1] *Lord Ormont and his Aminta.*

[2] Sir Alexander Mackenzie, K.C.S.I., married to Mrs. W. M. Meredith's sister.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To W. Gordon Clarke.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Jan.* 2, 1894.

DEAR MR. GORDON CLARKE,—I would hurry to tell you in person how your kind remembrance of me touches the hermit's heart. I am under an engagement with Scribner's Magazine to deliver a novel[2] in the Spring, and have to go the round of a well-horse daily. My greetings to you and all of a family I hold dear.—Yours very sincerely,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To E. L. Burlingame.[3]

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Jan.* 31, 1894.

MY DEAR MR. BURLINGAME,—A burdensome task is imposed on me, and it is the more vexatious in the feeling I have that I am inflicting a worse on you.—Here is the case: Roberts Bros. of Boston are publishers of the American edition of my novels. They have given me a small percentage on the sales. I held to them with my agent, until he very urgently stated, that it was your wish to have the publication of the book as well as the serial. That being so, it seemed to me that the one might naturally follow the other, and that the loss of one of

[1] Lady Mackenzie.

[2] *The Amazing Marriage.*

[3] Editor of *Scribner's Magazine.*

my books would not count for much with Roberts. They now write in dismay at the loss ;—it spoils their set, etc., and they will have nothing else of mine if they can't have that book. Here in England I have been unused to any consideration for a set of my books, and I am surprised. But I feel for them. As for me, whether I am a loser or not, I do not care—believe it. If, then, I can induce you to feel with me for them, and let them have the issuing of the book, without otherwise breaking our agreement, you will lay me under obligation. If you cannot do it, I shall know that you have good reason.—I am, always cordially yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

I beg you give my compliments to the friends about you.

To H. S. Salt.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *April* 3, 1894.

DEAR MR. SALT,—I read the little brochure[1] as soon as received and with great satisfaction to find these wholesome truths plainly put. I have for forty years harped on them, but the literary rounding of the theme in the mirror of fiction cannot be so useful as the directer method. I hope it will be circulated widely, and I respect the writer.

My thanks to you have been retarded by press of work to meet an Agreement, and it is wearing me to threads.

Now and then I see your name. Those least prominent are generally doing the better work.—Yours very truly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] *Sex Love*, by Edward Carpenter.

To E. L. Burlingame.

Box Hill, Dorking, *April* 20, 1894.

Dear Mr. Burlingame,—I have debated over the vexatious matter, and I have been very unwell, which has kept me from coming to a decision, but weighing the balance as well as I can, it seems to me that I am under an obligation to back the application of Roberts Bros.

They tell me very positively that the loss of one of my books will spoil their sets, and I would rather go against my own inclinations than do them injury.

I shall get no thanks from them, as they regard it evidently as a duty on my part, if not fealty for the small retainer fee which they have hitherto paid me.

Now let me tell you that during my engagement I have had, and am only recovering from, a second attack of ulcerated eyelids—owing to poor condition of blood. I may therefore have to beg for an extension of six weeks to the present date of the agreement for delivery of MSS. In case of necessity I beg you will do me the favour to grant it.

As to the 'readjustment,' of which you speak, it is but right that I should pay fine to a reasonable amount. Kindly let me know by return mail what arrangement you would propose.—Yours truly,

George Meredith.

To G. Ward.

Box Hill, Dorking, *June* 13, 1894.

Dear Sir,—I hold commonly that donations and subscriptions should be anonymous. But in the case of testimony to a man's high and constant courage, the name is rightly an accompaniment.[1]—Yours truly,

George Meredith.

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[1] Refers to a testimonial to G. W. Foote.

To Mrs. Walter Palmer.

Box Hill, Dorking, *June* 27, 1894.

I have offered Cole £500 for your letter to him—exceeding the one to me by 17 words, five commas, three semicolons, and two full stops. He refuses to part with it, at least during life. He says I may and shall have it subsequently, on the condition that I do something for his family.—Why of course.—But the chances are, he survives me. Then I shall never get it at all. And it 's beautiful, it beats everything on earth, and it 's Jean's. There 's the heavenly dot upon the mortal I ! Poor Cole goes about as if he had eaten of the insane root. His head rounds and rounds like an English cottage garden's wooden soldier in the wind. I fear that you have done for him. I know I should like to be done for every other day like that. Dreadful busy. A Novelist's prolonged delivery is a terrible matter. Tell Harry to be sure and come early on Saturday. The Dearie in his absence is a sack of shreds leaning heavily on us.

My love to Walter and Gladys, from the overflow to Jean. George Meredith.

To Mrs. Sturgis.

Box Hill, Dorking, *July* 24, 1894.

My own Dearie,—I write, with little to say, that you may have a word from your old home, after a week of marriage.[1]—I forgot to tell you, Mrs. Leslie with Vanessa, Virginia and Stella called last week They have been feasting ancient women on the hill. Stella had lost one, though the whole party wandered waking the echoes for her from 4 to 5 p.m. She passed into the wood, and there she remains. The Leslies have fled to St. Ives. Good news of Thoby—he has won a Scholarship, and with about as much effort as for a dive off a plank. On Sunday Louison, staying with the Deverells. John of Verrelle brought her and Jack. William Maxse comes to-day. You will have heard from him or Daisy of the poor Colonel's illness.—Let Harry know that his letter is a very great comfort to me.—I try to propitiate Swithin in your interests. His countenance here the last two days has been November. No Dorking, no Ranmore in view. Grey crayon on white sheet of two abandoned picnic donkeys before the chalet.—Letter from Jessie Winkle, with description of Loch Awe, but not a line of poetry. What has happened to her?

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[1] Miss Meredith had married Henry Parkman Sturgis.

Now, my Sweetie, I must end my dottery-pottery ramble over the page just to breathe Box Hill on you.—With love to Harry and an embrace of my flown girl,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Sturgis.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *July* 26, 1894.

MY OWN DEARIE,—I send a line, for the sake of conversing, and to make you feel that your old home closely backs your honeymooning holiday.—The letter to Cole gave purest pleasure. You may have a recollection—hazy and transatlantic—of the St. John's Wort bank in our wood. The length of it is now flowering, and I defy Swithin at the lift of his brows for a smile over Loch Awe, to waken so golden a face as we have here. We have besides two rubbish heaps a-smoking. And the hollyhocks are out. This is not meant to compare with the joys of a drive on a Highland coach, but simply to say that we have our excitements. Sidney Colvin (Louison writes) exonerates Harry the cust (antipode of Harry the Blest) from the charge of writing the article, as that Harry is out of the country.—Mind you communicate with the

Glasgowgoes, for if they hear of you as in Scotland, and do not hear from you, they may feel wounded.—Will here on Tuesday night, business about publication of my minor tales.—The picture of the Loch and hotel over your last letter to me much studied here.—Invitation to the Lawrences, and to the Bryants'—'cricket-field.'

So there is a bagful of Box Hill for you.—With my love to Harry, farewell to my Dearie,

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Sturgis.

Box Hill, Dorking, *August* 1, 1894.

Yesterday the Dearie was a two weeks' old married woman. Papa will go on wondering. His loneliness is lightened by the thoughts of her happiness.—Who came yesterday? Queen Jean. Let her gladden the cot. I 'd rather be here than—name the places you please. She brought Queenie Severs and Arthur Blackwood. She was looking worthy of the crown I set on her brows. We talked of you. Off went her tongue on the great Harry. Enviably rich tones, demanding of me all my love to bear to hear them! On Friday last Hospital Nurses' festival at Burford Lodge. The Miss L.'s brought Dr. Weir Mitchell. He began by congratulating America and me. Said his family had known the Sturgis family for 150 years, esteemed all members of it.—However, Jean in her benignness will descend on Tuesday, with Queenie or Walter, for dinner and a night, sleeping in the Dearie's abandoned little room.—Hollyhocks grandly out, like a grenadier regiment in gala uniform for royal review—and no Dearie to flatter them with a look. Boyardo punctual to the stroke of the dinner-gong. Dixon in a hut among the gooseberry bushes, nursing thick-haired black kitten.

This is to greet you after visit to the Trossachs. Cole madly jealous of your casting eye on the Ben 'Venus' he scaled.

To Mrs. Seymour Trower.

Box Hill, Dorking, *August* 2, 1894.

My dear Mrs. Trower,—No lack of the wish to be with you on the 20th, but the fear that I shall not be totally disengaged from this cannon-ball attached to my leg, stops me from running to Cobham that day. As it is, I am at your disposal any day after the 28th. By then I do hope to be free: and if not, I will postpone the last flourishes to this work, and do them when you have refreshed me.

That is, if my tardiness has not made me too late in replying to you.—Excellent news from the happy couple. They are taking many excursions about Loch Awe. I may see them before our meeting—on the assumption of that occurrence.

With my love to you and Barcarolo Mimetals, I am your faithful George Meredith.

To Mrs. Sturgis.

Box Hill, Dorking, *August* 7, 1894.

My own Dearie,—The enclosed (tho' it's a vestige of her) to show you that Jean plays me false. She can't come.—A letter from Mrs. White of Loseley:—to meet J. Morley. I can't go.

Old Will away this morning. He walked Bruny to Parkhurst yesterday, and so tired the lapin-yapper that he hadn't a run or a bark for the multitudinous white scuts flashing about.—Have written to Mrs. Trower. At Weybridge on the 29th she meets me at Cobham, as of old—of old! Chapter—the—24th—Harry Sturgis has changed all that. But what fun if—I will hope it. My Dearie Sweet is drawing nigh on the end of her Honeymoon. I shall grieve at her holiday over, but exceedingly rejoice to see her.—My work will want a chapter or two for finish at the end of the month. Never enter on the composition of a novel with a light heart. I have had to drive two dozen characters as two, making all run together to one end.—Mrs. Glasgowgo comforted me with a good report of you—the usual prostrate tribute to Harry. I wish I had more to tell for your amusement. News always refreshing to me, but don't be bent upon writing if there are difficulties.

Love to Harry the Conqueror, and I embrace my darling. GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Sturgis.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *August* 8, 1894.

MY DEARIE SWEET,—I write, that you may have a word from me before your farewell to the Loch. Harry's letter helps to the picture of you in your absence, and to my sustainment.

Boyardo is diligent in attendance at the dinner-hour. Dixon and her kitten vacated the box in the garden very mysteriously. At last Dixon was watched by Cole, after he had locked her up at his dinner-hour. This kept her from Kits too long to be endured. She, however, made pretence as of nothing when he came back. So Cole made pretence of going on with his work. She then slipped round the Stables, and he followed, in time to see her dart up the ivy-ledge over the gate—where the kitten was posted. She had objected to Bruno's nose in her box.

I send 'Bookman'—have no idea of the writer. Shall be glad to hear from Gairloch—rather fear rough passage out of Oban. No special news. Harry will know that I don't reply to him, only because of incessant writing:—and this to you is an equivalent.

The Lawrences all off to the Dolomites on Sunday next.—Your loving Dada, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Sturgis.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *August* 11, 1894.

MY OWN SWEETIE,—I hope this and the papers may reach you—but you sent no clearer address. Last night, for the first time, I was reconciled to your absence. We had a Bird of Storm brooding on us for hours, and away and back, with fifty million Electric lights and all the world's Cathedral organs crashing. How the Dearie would have bowed her head on her hands! To-day fair, with a little Swithining. My hopes are with your voyage. I am often on the boat.

Will is here.

A letter from Queen Jean at Coniston. Ruskin proposes flight with her to-morrow. I can excuse him, I do not wonder. She is for Dinard on the 20th.—Ostensibly for health, but really to pick up last year's souvenirs of Oscar in the place!

Mrs. Crow of Chicago comes on Tuesday.

No news. I embrace my darling, and with all happiness to Harry, am ever GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Sturgis.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *August* 15, 1894.

MY OWN DEARIE,—Your telegram from Loch Maree has comforted me in the lack of letters, and I can well understand your having little time to write. We have no news. Cole brings word from the Grove that you are expected there on the 18th—this very Saturday! How happy will your Dada be to see you!

Telegraph your departure for London.

Mrs. Crow of Chicago came to dine yesterday. A really good and pleasant woman. M. Marcel Schwob and Léon Daudet come for two or three days on their way to Scotland in October.

Boyardo very furry and perky, Dixon adventurously maternal. Dogs well. Work not yet done.

Love to you both. GEORGE M.

To Mrs. Walter Palmer.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *August* 16, 1894.

DEAR QUEEN JEAN,—I have mislaid or destroyed Mrs. Crow's letter with address. I think you may get it by sending messenger to Mr. Stead, Mowbray House, Norfolk Street, Strand.

I do trust that Walter will be careful of you on the way by water from St. Malo to Dinard. The Comtesse de Montesquieu and another dame, with husbands and lap-dogs, were shot into the water last week, and had to kick legs hanging on to oars for minutes, and might —— one poor fellow did. I am very busy, and Swithin darts pains up one arm. You are to have a beautiful 3 parts of September.

All my heart to you, my hand to Walter.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Walter Palmer.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Sept.* 28, 1894.

There stood in her street a poor exile of Queen Je'n,
He sang a long ballad devoid of all point;
And the sole thing made clear by this broken down engine,
Was 'Harry has put my old nose out of joint.'

GEORGE M.

Enclosure.

In search of a novel.—This dialogue was recently overheard at a well-known bookseller's shop in Dublin. Lady: 'Oh, have you got "The Ordination of Peter Peveril"? I'm afraid I've forgotten the author's name.' Attendant: 'Very sorry, madam, but I don't recognise the title.' Lady: 'Oh, never mind.' After a pause—'Have you got any other books by the same author.'

To the 'New York Herald' on the death of O. W. Holmes.

Oct. 22, 1894.

Deep personal regret for the loss of the dearest, cheerfulest, and most honourable of men, and a lasting treasure to our language.

To E. L. Burlingame.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Oct.* 26, 1894.

Dear Mr. Burlingame,—My son has telegraphed that your office is at liberty to reduce for serial purposes the length of my novel.

I am sure you have in your staff one to whom I can confide as I would to Mr. Bridges this surgical operation which shall lop excesses without wounding an artery. This without damage to the full publication subsequently, for if I have been criminal in running to this excess, it has come of my consciences in regard to thoroughness.

The remainder shall be sent you in the course of a very few weeks.

I trust you may like the work throughout.—Believe me, very truly yours, George Meredith.

To Mrs. Sturgis.

BOX HILL, *Nov.* 1, 1894.

I would I were with Jean,
Atripping on a green,
And she to call me her true knight,
And I to crown her queen.

The ordering of her set,
We 'd leave to sweet Riette,
And Walter he should pipe our dance,
Upon the flageolet.

Off to Parkhurst, Pitts below. Pessimist fog clearing.
Home to-morrow.
Kisses to a dearie from her Dada.

Mrs. Seymour Trower.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 16, 1894.

MY DEAR MRS. TROWER,—I have never had so beautiful a book. It will be prized by me as your work, and for the pleasure of the eyes, though you play at undervaluing it to make my gratitude easier. I hope to see you on the night of Joe Carr's 'Arthur.' Mrs. Walter Palmer offers me a seat in her box. Then, let me hope, I may persuade you to bring the Gondolier to my cot before Mrs. Henry Parkman (once called the Dearie) seduces you to visit her place of superior accommodation. Our domestics vow they will make you comfortable, and I can conceive your meeting us half-way, though as for the Gondolier's amusement we shall require help of Givons Grove. Father William's pride in his infant is immense. He holds it at his window half an hour at nine every morning for the populace to see, and will be doing it at the Font to-morrow. Love to Gondolier. My warmest to you. GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Robert Bridges.[1]

BOX HILL, DORKING,
ENGLAND, *Dec.* 28, 1894.

DEAR MR. BRIDGES,—Your 'Arcady' chapters show you to have the supreme art of criticism; that of absorbing the substance and rendering it in the spirit. A writer who is thus taken up to be sublimated may well believe that he is an essential something, whatever may be thought of his degree. You have thought my work worthy of this method, and I am grateful. Your praises of my fellow authors appear to me so just that I am almost tempted to believe I am not over-valued.

When you are next in England, pray, do me favour to visit me.—Your faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Walter Palmer.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Jan.* 8, 1895.

DEAR QUEEN JEAN,—I can hardly feel the pen in my hand, the chalet is a refrigerator. It will be better for you to exclude me from the Lyceum festival. I find that the strain of my prolonged work has made me a crazy machine, and I doubt of being able to sit through the performances. As for mounting the stage after it, I should have first to mount the back of the King of the Crumpets and be shown about by him as a Kensington excrescence. Therefore, my Liege, excuse me, and let me come to you in a milder season, when I may be stronger. Do not say you will renounce the supper for my sake. I should be miserable at the thought. In my coin de feu, I shall have you in my mind all the blessed evening, and feel as much happiness as can be granted me.—Your most loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

The treatment of Henry James at the close of his play will prove to Americans that the Old Country retains a fund of the cowardly part of barbarism.

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[1] Robert Bridges of New York.

To W. M. Meredith.

Feb. 24, 1895.

Dear Will,— . . . I am recovering. There was no sore throat, so it may, I suppose, have been only a sharp cold. You dosed me with Batson [1]—absolutely without need. I thought I had escaped the bottle, for I told him I was going on well. But, no—next day Cole came into my room bursting, bottle in hand. I have taken it simply to have something for the 'professional attendances' account after next Christmas, when it will taste like the 'draught to follow meals.' I wait anxiously to hear of the babe. Write word at once. Glad to see you when you can come, and shall then hope you can avoid the night air.—Your own, George Meredith.

To Alphonse Daudet.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 7, 1895.

Cher Monsieur,—Vous m'avez fait grand plaisir en m'envoyant votre excellent livre et les aimables lignes que vous y avez ajoutées. Étant souffrant en ce moment, et incapable de me charger moi-même de ce soin, j'ai prié mon éditeur de vous faire parvenir mes 3 dernières nouvelles, écrites depuis longtemps, mais que je viens seulement de faire réunir et publier en un volume.

Ce sont de petits contes modernes, qui n'ont point, hélas, comme vos contes choisis, le parfum de rosée de la Provence, que je connais si bien.

Agréez, cher Monsieur, l'expression de mes sentiments de vive cordialité, George Meredith.

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[1] Dr. Batson of Dorking.

To Frederick Greenwood.

Box Hill, Dorking, *April* 19, 1895.

My dear Greenwood,—I see by your hand in the paper, that you 're up and doing, like the young year with winter rolled away, to be forgotten till we sneeze again. I wished to see you when I was in London, as I so rarely am, for it seems my only chance to meet you there. But will you not break the spell and come for a night or two? The daffodils are over our banks, the cowslips beginning to crowd, and a South-wester in prospect for weeks; which means a variation of high skies and low, glooms and glories. What better, to speed sweet converse? And novelists are worth talking with, you should learn. After Sunday week, the cottage has a bed. My son and my daughter have gone to the yoke; but she is handy and will be glad to meet you at my table. Say! Put steel to your muscles and aim in my direction. You will greatly revive a creature resting from the enfantement of two novels without a pause.—Always warmly yours, George Meredith.

To Frederick Greenwood.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 14, 1895.

My dear Greenwood,—Alphonse Daudet and son Léon, with Henry James, come to me on Thursday by train from Charing, arriving at S. Eastern Box Hill, 3.35. They dine and return by L. B. and S. C. 8.25. Maxse (now a Tory) offers himself, but probably will not dine. He still has his radical stomach. The bed awaits you, if you can persuade yourself to be of the party. My welcome you know.—Warmly yours,

George Meredith.

To Madame Alphonse Daudet.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *May* 24, 1895.

CHÈRE MADAME DAUDET,—J'ai reçu et j'ai lu et relu avec un grand plaisir le volume de Poésies que vous m'avez honoré en m'envoyant. Comme vous, j'aime ces Heures Blanches de l'aube et du crépuscule : seulement je n'aurais jamais l'art d'en rendre, comme vous, comme dans un miroir, l'impression.

Je dirais à M. Daudet que, si son Treize Mai lui a donné une Muse pour compagnon pour la vie, le numéro fatal a plutôt béni que châtié. On peut bien se dire cela en se sentant meurtri.

Agréez, chère Madame, mes hommages respectueux, et croyez-moi sincèrement.—Votre dévoué,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Society of Authors.[1]

July 1895.

I dare not put the strain upon myself, in spite of my desire to testify personally, as written words can but poorly do, to my great esteem for your ante-penultimate chairman, considering both his unexampled services to the profession of letters, and his literary quality. A title is more than a thing of air when it stands for the nation's acknowledged debt to the man consenting to bear it, the distinction of whom, in the present case, will be a perpetual reminder of his labours on behalf of young authors, and his devotion to the interests of his fellow craftsmen. Most heartily do I applaud him, with envy of his admirable persistency, his constant good temper, and spirit of fairness to opponents in the struggle. If any further elements go to the making of a champion, he possesses

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[1] On the occasion of a banquet to Sir Walter Besant.

them, for he has won the gratitude which breathes of its cause of existence, and the honour which only a common national accord can give.

To Mrs. Walter Palmer.

Box Hill, Dorking, *August* 4, 1895.

Walter's letter has relieved me just a little. I see that I am not to have you here. Now regarding your project to court the Alps, take my counsel and avoid all Highlands during this month. Elsewhere there may be a few sunny hours in the day. On or near the mountains rain and snow will prevail up to September, and after a pause up to Christmas. This for the reason that we have a huge amount of South-West wind due to us. Damp air would be noxious to you. I should advise the Cape, if it were not for the long voyage. Supposing you have to go, choose a place on the Italian side of the Alps, and stop at one of our seaside menageries until September. Please pay heed to my warnings. I think, too, that at present you should avoid long railway journeys. Remember my prognostic of the American expedition—Walter is happily out of the political crash. I should like to give him my view of how it occurred and the wherefore. You should see the Dearie lying with her babe on one arm! the funniest little ting-ting, with its outline of features all crumpled up in sleep, under a dark wig.—Your devoted George M.

To W. Morton Fullerton.

Box Hill, Dorking, *August* 21, 1895.

My dear Morton Fullerton,—I leave here on Saturday, returning at the end of a week, when I shall be ready to receive your friends, and will ask Harry Sturgis to meet them at my table. Riette brought her babe to-day, the first drive they have taken since our light was on the little one ; both looking well. Madame Pauline, wife of Georges Hugo, translated the 'Ode to France' for the 'Nouvelle Revue' creditably, to my thinking.

Do not be disheartened ; hug your forces, so as to believe in them, and bide your time. It is sure to come to those who are faithful to themselves. And if we are cut down midway we smile at all the wishes incident to breath. I have lived long enough to see that our chief agonizer and thwarter is impatience. One of the prettiest spectacles to me is a costermonger's donkey going blithely at the trot. Our maxim should be, merry in harness,—while we have to serve. A sermon, but short, and you provoked it.—In all friendliness I am your

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Seymour Trower.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Dec.* 23, 1895.

Dearest Lady ByTheWey,—On Friday 27th, you, the Gondolier, and Mr. Tipping come to the Meredith Arms. Or letting a foul day pass for a blank one, say the 28th. Or the Gods taking part against us, it is prayed that the Zenobia of caligraphy send forth a squadron with the appointment of a further day. But some day for certain !
—Warmly yours, George Meredith.

Dec. 23, 1895.

I am deeply sensible of the honour conferred on me by the committee in the invitation to join the Welsh dinner on St. David's day. Nothing but a weak state of health stays me from accepting it. I am to decline all invitations of the kind by doctor's decree, more than commonly against my natural leaning in the present case. Believe me that as I prize the esteem of Welshmen I should gladly seize the occasion for good fellowship with them: and I think we should understand one another. Do not, I beg you, take the brevity of this letter for a sign of coldness to the distinction and pleasure you propose.[1]

To Mrs. Christopher Wilson.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Dec.* 31, 1895.

My dear Mrs. Wilson,—Your kind and serviceable gift has come. A word to remind me that you think of me would have been enough. But I am grateful for the material sign of it. Pray, keep your promise to bring Queen Jean for a day to us. She sends me flattering and illusory messages, she never appears. Indeed, so many are her subjects that she would be torn to little pieces if she were to gratify us all. You and Dora will any day you like refresh me with a visit.—Your ever affectionate

George Meredith.

To the Editor of the 'Daily News.'

March 4, 1896.

No Englishman listens to a novelist on public affairs; I send my view[2] as briefly as I can give it:

Since the benignant conclusion of the greatest of civil wars, I have looked on the American people as leaders of our civilisation; and whatever may be said among them, I am not alarmed by a thought of their wantonly or willingly or consenting taking the step to shatter it. Their President has done us the service to shake us into the expression of active good sense when we propose Arbitration. But it should be remembered that such a proposal is honourable only in a country relying on its ready strength.

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[1] In reply to an invitation to attend St. David's Day Dinner.

[2] Upon the Anglo-American Arbitration Scheme.

To Mrs. Meynell.

Box Hill, *March* 24, 1896.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,—I am relieved. The last Autolycus[1] was an antic foreigner, and I feared—as I have written to your husband. When you come to me, we will have talk of the art and aim of verse, and of Sentiment, and the good thing it is when not pretending to a kingdom of its own? I shall teach you nothing that can be new to such a mind as yours, but I shall be leaven to your deeper thoughts of Earth and Life.

I wish you were here now. The days have been gloriously South West. Dimpling would trot from our garden violets to the orchard daffodils and jonquils at all hours. Unhappily we shall have an April and May of North East. Please tell me when you are in the mood to make me happy here; you will be always welcome, and will refresh me. A bunch [of violets] departs to greet you, with the cottager's love. George Meredith.

To Professor James Sully.

Box Hill, Dorking, *April* 4, 1896.

Dear Sully,—Your book[2] arrived, and is now being very carefully studied and annotated by the mother of a smiling babe half an inch greater in bulk, who has already begun to observe with interest the motions of his great toe when he is in his bath. Further details will be communicated. The nurse, the mother and the father are pencil in hand about the infant for your behoof. Very seriously indeed let me say that considering the length of time you have devoted to the observation of these little ones and your devout intentness, the marvel is that you did not sink midway into the condition of the infant's mind. It is a triumph of the philosophical, and nothing else would have sustained you. I have heard praises of the book from young mothers, and I have little doubt that you have already testimony of the solid philosophical value of your patient study. As to me, I read and admire; forgive me for not having replied before this. I am all in arrears with every form of correspondence, and can scarce advance a step without a plucking from behind. —Ever yours truly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Mrs. Meynell was the author of a series of articles entitled 'The Wares of Autolycus' in the *Pall Mall Gazette.*

[2] *Studies of Childhood.*

To Mrs. Meynell.

BOX HILL, *April* 10, 1896.

MY DEAR MRS. MEYNELL,—You sent me a burst of Spring sunshine. I wish it were to-day for your coming; we have the softest South-Wester to rock our daffodils and cowslips. May the Monday be as fair!

I am in debate whether I would not barter the noble flourishes in your letter for just one line more. But the sage reflection tells me that the letter would not be yours without the flourishes, and such a verification makes me heartily content with my small allotment. This shall be my 'habit.'

If the weather should gloom and drench on Monday, even my disappointment will rush to excuse you and beg you will name the next convenient day.—I am your most faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Meynell.

BOX HILL, *April* 24, 1896.

MY DEAR MRS. MEYNELL,—I come to Upper Brook Street to-day—and how gladly if there were a prospect of meeting you! I wish besides to see and know all your young ones. I would venture to call about your hour of tea to-morrow if I were quite sure of finding you at home. I am carried in the early afternoon to pronounce on a portrait of Mrs. Walter Palmer at the New Gallery (by Sandys). Not meeting you there, I might drive down for ten minutes.

These days of sun, and the surrender of the young beech-buds to him, make me long to have you here for your picnic. Regard it as that. And, as the North East is toward, you may decide (I think for the children) to come and just taste the place for a couple of days with two of the girls next week. Then, if you and your husband have reason to be pleased, you will engage to bring the children for a good week, when they can pass their lives in open air. My daughter leaves the neighbourhood for the London season after next week. There is a Catholic chapel at Dorking, let me add. I have huddled my facts together, keeping my sentiments unwritten: but you can discern them.—Your devoted

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Meynell.

Box Hill, *April* 28, 1896.

My dear Mrs. Meynell,—Your willingness to come when the auspices are favourable shall water my desert until I see you here. A chance of our meeting is offered for the 6th May, and I hailed the boredom of a crush to embrace it, with the promise to be in town. If you are at Upper Brook Street that evening, you will perhaps be able to fix your date.

At present I think of you gladly, as with your sister,[1] drawing strength from sea-breezes; out of the cage of brick,[1] a visible universe about you, and those winged eyes of yours abroad in it.

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[1] Lady Butler.

You write of your not being a talker. I can find the substance I want in your silences, and can converse with them. Your plea in excuse makes me ashamed of my prattle. Let me tell you that my mind is not always with my tongue in the act. I do it for the sake of sociability, and I am well disposed either to listen or to worship the modest lips that have such golden reserves.—I am ever your true servant, friend, and the more than any word can stamp it, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Meynell.

BOX HILL, *May* 31, 1896.

MY DEAR MRS. MEYNELL,—Herewith the photograph is returned, to reach you safely, as I trust. It sent me to read 'A Remembrance' again, and I can conjure up a likeness between the outer and the inner in that devoutly steady tracing by the daughter's hand—which is more than great singing to me. My book of 'The Rhythm'[2] will be flying to-morrow to Henry James, who was here yesterday, and earned the gift by his appreciation of the contents. I could not let him have it until another was on its way to fill the vacancy. 'Shadows' is a masterly example of the substance you can put upon a thin suggestion. 'Daughters' Portions' wars excellently, in the best of causes. Where I have stood grumbling at injustice, and shooting jibes, you have done the work required. Such an article will bear fruit. My sweet sister in the Muse shall soar higher than I without shaming me. My pride will be to keep the title of brother.

Our garden expects no answer to flowers; enough to know that you love it. A box of the iris (now called Alicia Caerulea) wings to you to-morrow. I have been persuaded by the Miss Lawrences of Whitehall Place to come up for the last Richter concert on the 8th. After that I must take to my pen. Give no time to poetry of mine. You will find no sentiment in it—except the tragedy of sentiment: it is wild, hither and thither, following nature, opposed to your classic scheme.

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[1] The Constable's Tower, Dover Castle.

[2] *The Rhythm of Life*, by Alice Meynell.

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Meynell.

Box Hill, *June* 17, 1896.

Tribute from my Lady's garden journeys to her to-day.

At last we have the South-West with his own face and his watery features. You are brave as larks, you will not fear him. Though I would save you from risks, let me remind you that he is a splendidly and suddenly variable monster, who jumps from black to bright over a marvelling earth between your shudder and your sigh. Yet you must refrain if he is very black. But he will rather smile, to please me. Let him lure you hither! He may do as he lists after.

Much have I been reading you these days, and then I must away to correction of my books. And troth, it is as if from worship in a cathedral I were dragged away to a dancing-booth.

Coventry Patmore's article in the 'Saturday.' Good intention, and I like him for writing it. But why did he quote, of all things that! Did he fancy himself addressing a circle of Provençal Princesses? And the mention of the poem of Keats, too, where there is no likeness, except in the words of sans merci. The worst of it is, he stirs a demon imp in me. I chide, I chide the dame, and then I hear her out and cease to chide; but analyze, and can own her sweet to the ear, wondering what it is in her that extracts her deadly bitter from a sugar-refinery . . . till in the end I have her as a figure of High Comedy, my new Célimène, and she becomes mine against her will, but she has waxed intelligible, perhaps to be better satisfied with herself. Irreverent—but whose the fault? Your devoted friend salutes you at your knees.

GEORGE M.

To Mrs. Meynell.

BOX HILL, *June* 26, 1896.

DEAREST FRIEND,—Letters from you refresh me; but tribute of your garden is not to exact them. Soon there will be weeds displacing flowers, as in a certain 'volcanic' heart cinders now the ancient energies.

I have been vexed by word from Leo Maxse that the 'National' had gone to press when my short article[1] was proposed. He begs to have it for the August number, and the Admiral has thundered twice to that effect. It is inadequate—what could be adequate? I have curbed fervency as much as I could. You shall see a type-copy, and if you have an objection or a scruple, I pray you state it, and the article shall go.

Last night I did commit a sonnet on the Alicia Caerulea. You shall have your revanche in reading when you come to see the swifts. You and the poet[2] will have heaven's welcome to the elect. But the cottage will be wounded if you decide not to sleep in it after having tried its poor resources. Be kind.

I go to Dr. Plimmer at Sydenham on Saturday week. He has got the score of 'Otello,' to play it me; says it is Wagner and water; would seem to say it is the Verdi-gris of Wagner. He begs to meet you here, warmly admires the Essays, but is one of those mean enthusiasts who cannot allow a discerned Immortal to top the mortal originally worshipped by them.

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[1] Mrs. Meynell's Two Books of Essays.

[2] Francis Thompson.

Please let me know when you are away to Lymington. And give my love to the husband and the children.

To Mrs. Meynell.

Box Hill, *Oct.* 1, 1896.

An idea of an article[1] à propos. There are memoirs of Nelson published in earlier days; but later than Southey, about twenty years back or something more, Mrs. Trench gave a witnessed scene or two of him and his Emma in the denigrant vein, very striking. By contrast Sir G. Elliot's Reminiscences (2nd Vol.) cite an instance of his devotion to Hardy, quite delightful. Riette has it and will send the vols. if you write to Givons Grove, Leatherhead. Your husband might copy from Mrs. Trench at the Brit. Museum Library.

To Mrs. Seymour Trower.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Dec.* 2, 1896.

Dearest Lady BytheWey,—I have seen Will, who tells me of his having seen you; so you know what can be done—if you really wish for the portrait of a sick ancient, with a dead eye of the two under the crumbling brows.—I do hope you will come when your ogre has led you to daylight . . . at Christmas. I am at work, a Series of Three Odes. The First, 'The French Revolution,' is done. I am midway in the 'Napoléon.' The Third is 'Alsace-Lorraine.' You will catch the idea in the sequence. It is History—my view; and I make History sing! Clio in Calliope.—You shall judge.

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[1] The article, fulfilling the suggestion, was written and printed in the *Pall Mall Gazette* on Nelson Day.

My love to the Gondolier. Insist on his accompanying you hither.—Your faithfullest

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 23, 1896.

DEAR FRED,—Your proposal would have won me—I should have liked to see the boys, and congratulate Leo on his work, Ivor on his prospects. But I am in rather queer condition and must be in town to-morrow, to consult with Buckston Browne. I do not apprehend that it is very serious. I am, however, invalided. The work I am doing pushed to write at night, and that, I suppose, must be the cause of my breakdown.—Yours in all heart,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Frederick Greenwood.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 28, 1896.

MY DEAR GREENWOOD,—In old days of the Pall Mall, when you were under stress of battle, I used to send my New Year's word of hail on to you. You are out of the fray now, but still a ready fighter, and whether or not we are of a mind as to the means, we have an end in common.

I write on the point of journeying to London, to be under Buckston Browne. He is the ablest as well as one of the best of men, so my prospect is good, and he says moreover that the operation is not serious, as was the last. When I return, I should wish to see you here and read you my Odes. 'The French Revolution' is finished; the 'Napoléon' three parts; and 'Alsace-Lorraine' follows. I make History sing while interpreting her.—Your affectionate GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Alphonse Daudet.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *janvier* 19, 1897.

ILLUSTRE ET TRÈS CHER AMI,—Vous ne savez pas, j'espère, ce que c'est que le dégoût de la plume ? J'en suis horriblement affligé depuis mon retour à la chaumière. Et par malchance ma fille ne peut me servir au fait de lettres, comme d'ordinaire. Vous me pardonnez. Mon chirurgien (la main la plus habile en Angleterre) a fait de son mieux.[1] On m'a donné du chloroforme—c'est-à-dire que la Sainte Nymphe Nirvana s'est emparée de moi et m'a déposé aux pieds de son Dieu, et là je n'ai senti ni pensé—donc je n'étais pas. Et encore je suis, et je me réjouis de l'être en recevant votre lettre.

A Madame Daudet mes hommages les plus sincères, et je vous prie de faire souvenir Mlle. Edmée de l'ami de ses parens. C'était plaisir de voir Lucien et le plus Léonin des Léons léoninanti, dans sa pleine santé.

Toujours à vous du cœur, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To W. S. M'Cormick.

March 6, 1897.

DEAR PROFESSOR,—Here in the fewest possible words is the article you have asked for. Act with it according to your discretion. I made it as little heavily-shotted as I could. And coming from a mere literary man, the briefer the better.—Most hearty congratulations to you. I hear of the lady's external charm.—Look in 'Cosmopolis' in a month or two for an Ode, 'The French Revolution,' to be followed by 'Napoléon,' and 'Alsace-Lorraine.' You may like them. I hope to have made History sing, and under sanction of philosophy.—Ever yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Another operation, similar to the first, had been undergone by Meredith, at a nursing home in London.

To Mrs. George Stevenson.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *April* 27, 1897.

DEAREST FRIEND,—All my heart is with you. I am deeply grieved for you and the boy. The suddenness shocks, but the end was to be desired by those at a distance, for your sake—though you cannot easily be reconciled to such a view of it. My thought is for her who has to fight her way on and wants her supply of strength.

I think of Loch Earn, and the kind fellow always anxious to serve!—The Professor and his bride were here the other day. We talked of you. I have proposed writing to you I know not how often. Letters are constantly clamouring for answer, and I am generally in servitude to work—as now. May God bless you, my dear.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Meynell.

BOX HILL, *June* 13, 1897.

ADMIRED PORTIA,—The Alicia Caerulea desires nought better than to bloom her last and die on her dark sister's bosom. She is thought enviable.

I send the Napoléon, so that you may be under no complimentary compulsion to incur the tedium of the journey hither and back for the flashing visit—though I so love to see you. If you find it goodish, you are the author. If otherwise, I am the culprit. Remember that it is an Ode of History, which presents us with gross matter, and I must deal it out, to be true to the subject. I have been tempted by the rhetorical—History's pitfall for the Muse. I have avoided this as much as I could even in the Portrait, where antithesis invited strongly and was not always to be shunned. Two words in one of your wren-notes will tell me.

Following your departure at Sydenham, opinion agreed that you had never been seen to shine so brightly up to the mark of my eulogy: which proves that you flower as an idol, and Miss Tobin must be always with you.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Seymour Trower.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Summer of* 1897.

MY DEAR LADY BYTHEWEY,—Your fell possessor (to whom, I beg you, hand the enclosed, with my thanks) assures me of his merciful design to deliver you out of his vast and smoky antre into light and air for a while. It would be an opportunity for a drive over to me!—the Gondolier revived on cycle behind you. I promise him he shall not have a dry bird for lunch, I have so frightened my cook with the description of his face when he had her version of a grouse before him (I write in the dark).—Pete[1] is well, my day-long companion, the pet of everybody.—Your most faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Seymour Trower.

August 18, 1897.

DEAREST LADY BYTHEWEY,—On Sept. 1st the Dearie leads me down to Overstrand, for I know not how long. The Batterseas urged me last year to repeat the visit, and though I warned them of the tyranny of Annuals, giving the example of your shocking plight, they have won Riette to join their request. She has taken a house near The Pleasaunce. I shall see her and her young ones every day. O that you were to be at Sheringham! I will get Lord B. to drive me over. Perhaps I may see Elsie and the Jamesons. Admiral League[2] spying over the North Sea for sight of an invader sail, before his return to guard the Silver streak, would be a fine spectacle.

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[1] Pete—a dachshound given to Meredith by Mr. Harold Peto.

[2] H. Seymour Trower, at that time president of the Navy League,

Remember me warmly to witty Joe and musical James, their enduring spouses and blessed infants, and to the Admiral of the White coin.—With my love to you, I am

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Seymour Trower.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Oct.* 21, 1897.

My dear Lady ByTheWey,—. . . League's doings in Trafalgar Square have been very funny—and like him. But the 'pungent powder' he applied to the noses of the somnolent plinth Lions, to make them sneeze and roar, was surely not gunpowder, as the malicious affirm? They say he would be satisfied with nothing less. In any case, he has diverted us, and perhaps given the foreigner a twinge.—Your ever faithful George Meredith.

To Frederick Greenwood.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Jan.* 3, 1898.

My dear Greenwood,—When you were the constant evening star over Northumberland Street, I knew my mark. I am always forgetting Brittany Road, though not you at any season. Be sure of my lively good wishes on your behalf now and ever. As for old England, considering what she holds and the Powers confronting her, I cannot patiently look on her hesitations about the question of raising an army. Her God Neptune, whose divinity was killed by steam, keeps her still blind to the idea of national duty. Let her, then, give her patriotic poets a Martello Tower apiece, and bid them blow, they have wind enough—and she is for cheap service.

You will think the Odes are long. But they do not dawdle, for the tussle between the soul of France and the Napoleonic grip has to be shown.—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Walter Palmer.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Jan.* 29, 1898.

I am distressed by the news of Walter. When I last saw him he was firm and brisk. Your letter is a sad surprise. Pray keep me informed within the week. I shall have no peace until I hear. The Dearie will be afflicted. She has just come out of an Influenza. I have had a sharp attack of grippe—when I may offer myself to you I do not know. On both sides there seems now a barrier, and I long to see you and be under your wing for a short spell of happiness.

A man named Sutro came here from Forbes Robertson some days back, with the proposal to dramatise The Egoist, as Forbes has taken to the notion of personating Sir Willoughby. It may be done. Sutro brings me the sketch of the Comedy shortly. My three Odes, The Revolution, Napoléon, Alsace-Lorraine, appear in Cosmopolis, March, April, May. So much for me.

To Mrs. Stevenson.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Feb.* 13, 1898.

MY DEAR CALLANDRIA,—I am drenched with letters, which must have a reply. Do not let any thought of base whispers check the favourable view of this good man, whose mother's love can approve his desire for the union. Supposing him to be such as you describe, you will do well, if you follow an inclination, to consent. Only see first that Gogo takes to him, for the boy has jealousy in his love, and he should get accustomed to feel that the man is his friend. You were not made to live alone—you have the springs of devotion, and you are young and should be sensible of having the world before you. I trust you to be guided by a clear intelligence, and with prayers for your welfare, am your faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Leslie Stephen.[1]

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Feb.* 14, 1898.

MY DEAR LESLIE,—Your scroll of parchment with the honoured names on it was a surprise to me, for I am accustomed to regard my pronounced seniority as a simple matter of fact. The recognition, that I have always worked honestly to my best, coming from men and women of highest distinction, touches me deeply. Pray, let it be known to them how much they encourage and support me.

If you can spare time one day to bring Thoby here, I shall be glad to converse with him, and get at his present tastes and objects. It would be a great pleasure to see the girls, who are often in my thoughts, and any having relationship with the beloved mother.—Ever most warmly, your friend, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To T. Herbert Warren.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *March* 5, 1898.

DEAR MR. WARREN,—But this art of classical verse has never been practised by me. The Germans think little of it, but are excellent in their prose. For me, I am a mere skirmisher, reading only what I know and love. I can fully see the use of a practice that enabled Lord Lyttelton to give his rendering of Oenone. Let me thank you for the friendly words on my 'Comedy' in the Oxford

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[1] On receipt of a memorial of congratulation on his seventieth birthday.

Maga. The translation (it is well done) is by M. Henry Davray, now engaged in translating 'Harry Richmond.' My tardy reply pleads an attack of something like influenza—the second this year. And anything may happen to a man whose blood is no longer set spinning with exercise.—Most truly yours, George Meredith.

T. Herbert Warren.

Box Hill, Dorking, *April* 1, 1898.

Dear Mr. Warren,—I am greatly indebted to you for the English text of the papyrus Menander. I have Nicole's brochure, and find it more studious and conjectural—on the whole, more exciting if not explanatory. Even this little peep into a scene of the Menander Comedy helps me to conceive his method of unfolding and run of dialogue.—Most truly yours, George Meredith.

To Mrs. Sturgis.

Box Hill, Dorking, *June* 2, 1898.

My Dearie,—I hope you arrive home safe and well to-day, and find your Joan and her Beeby in good condition. Send me word. Lady Lewis was a blank on Tuesday. Your telegram from Guernsey revived my Yachting visit there in a stiff breeze; then through a phosphorescent sea by night to Weymouth, and so up the Solent, with St. B. and Hardman. You had, as we, wind S.W. by W., which gives cheerful Channel waves. I had a jump of the heart to be with you.—Your loving

George M.

To H. S. Salt.

Box Hill, Dorking, *June* 17, 1898.

Dear Mr. Salt,—I cannot remember, but have little doubt that all I have said of James Thomson was in his favour. Therefore you are at liberty to make what use you please of your recollections in that respect.

Please accept the enclosed small subscription to the purposes of your Society.—Yours truly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *June* 28, 1898.

DEAR ADMIRAL,—I will do my best to come, though I am threatened with a cold and an inflamed eyelid. But I must return on Friday afternoon by 4.5 train. And spare me the vexation of a request for the portrait. If it were accorded, it would be with a heart full of curses —and imagine the face over that infernal company—and a lovely hand sketching!

I come by 2.23 from Box Hill.—Ever yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *July* 6, 1898.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—Quiet of the true restorative kind is to be had here. Come and try it, if only for a couple of days, by breaking your journey on the way down to Hindhead. We will lounge in the orchard or drive up the lanes, conversing in nods and chuckles. The Odes, including 'France 1870,' printed in your 'Fortnightly,' will be published in September. I want your presence, that I may perceive whether the offer of the Dedication to you would be agreeable. It seems hardly asking you to stand sponsor. But you may have objections to the parade in a dedication, however plainly worded. I have no taste for the like. At the same time, your knowledge of French History, sympathy with France, and our old friendship, form a sort of plea, with the reminder that I must soon be going.

Tell your wife we have two bed-rooms, and a half, to spare, and I beg her to join in my entreaty. H[erbert] Paul brings his wife to dine on Saturday. I return the book of classical translations.—Warmly yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Seymour Trower.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *July* 6, 1898.

MY DEAR LADY BYTHEWEY,—Come if you can to-morrow, lunch 1½ or 2; telegraph, that we may expect you and the Jamesons. I long to hear from him of [the] Leitmotif—though indeed he has taken the world more or less into his confidence.—League (without his processional cocked-hat, wig and pigtail) came into my box on Monday night, looking battle-ships, Armstrongs, and torpedoes while he spoke of Cyrano and you. I believe I can do you good, and if you fail to come we shall not meet, for I have to prepare The Egoist for the boards and can go nowhere. Bring Jameson,[1] if even by force.—I am yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To T. J. Cobden Sanderson.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *July* 18, 1898.

MY DEAR SIR,—Enclosed is my subscription on behalf of the Milanese prisoners, with my name to your memorial paper.[2] It may be hoped that an appeal for money, coming from among our English people, may have some influence, for English sympathy in the cause of Italy and Italians has always been disinterested and warm. The humaneness of the King and Queen of Italy no one will question. But it is apparently thought politic to be rigorous. This was the view of the Austrian Governors of Milan, with the ultimate result that we know. They suppressed a revolt. In the present case it is but an outbreak, caused by intolerable burdens: and mercy will be an averting exercise of wisdom on the rulers, who should feel that they cannot plead to being guiltless.—Yours very truly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Frederick Jameson, a friend of long standing, a deep student of Wagner and translator of the cycle of 'The Ring.'

[2] On behalf of the Italian political prisoners.

To Albert J. Dearden.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *August* 31, 1898.

DEAR SIR,—I beg to thank you for your letter of August 26th. I am gratified to feel that my works are read by, and give pleasure to, such as yourself, whose lives must be spent in the great manufacturing centres of England, and I thank you for the expression contained in your letter, which are the rewards most valued for my life's work.—Yours sincerely, GEORGE MEREDITH.

Yes, I have the confidence, which began with hope and strengthens with experience, that humanity is gaining in the stores of mind, and that the signification of this Gift of life, that we should leave a better world for our successors, is being understood.

To Miss K. Lewis.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Sept.* 1, 1898.

CHÈRE MLLE. KATIE,—Et Tosti! Cet animal de Tosti! Et pendant que le monde réverbère de ce nom sonore et troublant, lequel a précipité tant d'âmes féminines à travers les ténèbres jusqu'aux portes infernales, ne pas en souffler mot me semble bien curieux! Pour moi je dis hautement que la très belle P. P. m'a honoré de sa photographie et que j'en suis fier, parcequ'elle m'assure qu'elle n'est pas une des esclaves de ce Tosti.

Yes, your host[1] rising to the cliff from the embrace of his Nereids all brinily radiant, he, it can be granted, is fascinating. I would I could see him and the lady who receives him with such gracious tolerance after his ocean escapades. Tell Gertie her sister doves are in practice to greet her on Monday at 2 P.M.—Your own

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Edward Clodd.

Sept. 16, 1898.

I have gone over the Fitzgerald Letters, much like a gossamer puffed by summer Zephyrus, running, leaping, dwelling. There should be a College for Editors. Fitz is good Suffolk soil, the most pleasing of foolings. His literary taste in the Classics is quite sound, and infantile out of them. . . .

To Frederick Greenwood.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Nov.* 14, 1898.

MY DEAR GREENWOOD,—I send you, by way of compliment—no kindness, my critics would say—a book of verse.[2] It requires to be read, and yet again, and as all the world is going on rails or wheels, you must try to find time at one or two stations. If the lines were softer, I would bid you hand it to a lady, but one has told me that they shake her.

How I wish to see you. I am to be found nowhere but here. I converse with the Looker-on. He writes forethoughtfully and sagely. The spectacle of France at this moment casts a shadow on humanity. It is unhappily good to think that we are armed. An Imperial must be an armed England—must bear the tax for an efficient army as well as navy.—Yours,

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[1] The late Lord Battersea.

[2] *Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History.*

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Theodore Watts-Dunton.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Nov.* 30, 1898.

DEAR MR. WATTS-DUNTON,—I pass your prohibition. A lover of poetry cannot get such a volume as yours[1] without some outcry, and you may as well hear that I am in love with Rhona, not the only one in that. The Petrel introduction, beautiful in itself, is admirably fitted to present her. When I read her love letter in the 'Athenæum' I had the regret that the dialect might cause its banishment by literature. Reading the whole poem I see that it is as good as salt to a plate. We are the richer for it, and that is a rare thing to say of any poem now printed. The sonnets are mostly my familiars. I will not speak of the tours de force except to express a bit of astonishment at the dexterity which can perform them without immolating the tender spirit of the work. I wish I had strength to pay you a visit at The Pines, and see Swinburne. Please assure him of my constant love. I have just completed three Odes, The Revolution, Napoléon, Alsace-Lorraine, and feel for the moment empty.—Believe me very warmly yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Lady Lewis.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 12, 1898.

DEAR LADY LEWIS,—Yes, to any friend of yours, and the 'no appreciation' is a boon.—Mrs. Strong came here with Lady Pollock on Saturday, and she pleaded for Gerty, while admitting that the damsel's behaviour to me was passing strange, and more in the manner of Katie. I gave her some of the natural history of the Stockdove. She thinks that Gerty cannot have calculated the short time remaining to her admirer, treated him as one of the youthful, to whom a miss in a visit is but a day's despair. Well, she was eloquent, but she left me still under that Sunday's impression. Nevertheless I send love, and I am your most faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] *The Coming of Love.*

To Theodore Watts-Dunton.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 19, 1898.

MY DEAR WATTS-DUNTON,—I must thank you for the full pleasure I have had in Aylwin—and only these later days, for I have been at work and dared not let a magician interpose. I am in love with Sinfi. Nowhere can fiction give us one to match her, not even the Kriegspiel heroine, who touched me to the deeps. Winifred's infancy has infancy's charm. The young woman is taking. But all my heart has gone to Sinfi. Of course it is part of her character that her destiny should point to the glooms. She soon comes to me again in her conquering presence. I could talk of her for hours.—The book has this defect—on the mind, it leaves a cry for a successor. I have noted minor bits of criticism, which we will discuss when we meet.—My love to Swinburne. It is brave news in these days of the trickling or bouncing verse that he has volumes in the press.—Your friend,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Meynell.

BOX HILL, *Jan.* 20, 1899.

Portia as advocate is not to be withstood. When she cites her instances in defence of a slumbering popular favourite, he awakens, lively as ever; Shylocky critics are confounded, and she carries the Court—though growls are heard of her being a dealer in plums. But if she restores his Homer to the cockney, what matters the means? I will confess that I am won by her. She hands me a plum, and I must own her client to be a lord outside cockaigne. It was very handsome pleading.[1]

I am grateful for the gift of the little book.[2] I knew the contents, and I read them again with the first freshness, the delight in the delicacy of the touch that can be so firm. It is the style of a queenly lady walking without her robes. Adieu, dear friend. Health and serenity to you all.—Your devoted

George Meredith.

To a Correspondent.

1899.

In reply to your request that I should name the French writers now dead who are in my opinion most characteristic of the genius of France, they are: For human philosophy, Montaigne; for the comic appreciation of society, Molière; for the observation of life and condensed expression, La Bruyère; for a most delicate irony scarcely distinguishable from tenderness, Renan; for high pitch of impassioned sentiment, Racine. Add to these your innumerable writers of Mémoires and Pensées, in which France has never had a rival.

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[1] Mrs. Meynell had contributed an article to the *Pall Mall Gazette* (later enlarged and published in the *Atlantic Monthly*) on Dickens as a man of letters, and had cited phrases from the majority of his writings. Meredith spoke to her of it as 'a good study—a good Jack Horner study.'

[2] *The Spirit of Place*—essays by Alice Meynell.

To Mrs. Walter Palmer.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 3, 1899.

Is it possible to hit such a wandering star as Jean? I sometimes give up the hope, but here is a shot of my arrow, hit or miss. I can imagine a week at Monte Carlo, not longer, and I think you must by this time be in Italian land. I trust that Nice will be avoided, Carnival and all. My dear, you were kind, as ever, in your gift for my 70th, and with two portraits of you to face me, I smoke the cigars every evening. I wonder whether I shall see you when you return to your primrose duties. 'Jean promised,' says a voice at one ear. 'Don't you know Jean?' says another. In any case I shall be glad to know you are safe home and nearer me, and that 's the crumb I look for from Jean's table. Love to Walter.

To Guy M. Carleton.

Box Hill, Dorking,
England, *March* 15, 1899.

Dear Sir,—Your letter and your essay on my work have given me the pleasure which flatters less than it prompts an author to think that he has written to some purpose; and such a message coming from one of the Universities, I even take for proof that an old head has touched the springs in young heads preparing for activity. Nothing could refresh me more.—As to the book of the juvenile poems, I was persuaded to print them in the 'luxe' edition, by an assurance that they would not be let escape by publishers after my departure. There they remain for the curious in youthful struggles to express.—If you should come to England and care to run down twenty miles from London, you will find pretty country and a welcome here.—I am, very truly yours,

George Meredith.

To Miss Frances Forbes-Robertson.

Box Hill, Dorking, *April* 4, 1899.

My dear Friend and Fellow-worker in the Craft,—I think you know my view that it is the braver choice to embrace the world than to renounce it. So must I be glad of your putting on the veil of acceptance instead of abnegation. You wavered, I heard; and I can augur well of the man who disposed you to take the way of nature's good old road. Expect merely the commonplace of happiness, accept in conventual spirit what is given, be assured that much of it corrupts, and above all let it be your pride to hold to your courage. There 's my sermon with God bless you. My health will not allow me to be present, but I shall survey the ceremony.—Count me ever among your faithful, George Meredith.

To Miss Gertrude Lewis.

Box Hill, *May* 9, 1899.

I will sign your petition.

I will not sign your petition, because, first, I am not an 'influential person'; secondly, I have not examined the decorations and cannot pronounce on them; thirdly, that all my vitality is concentrated in the Petition that Gertie Stockdove should love me.

I had news of you from Mr. Paul on Saturday, containing Anticipations, Fears, and Hopes. George M.

To A. Sidgwick.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 18, 1899.

Dear Sir,—It is understood that your communication is confidential. I could accept most gratefully an honour,[1]

[1] The offer of an honorary degree by the University of Oxford.

of which the proposal to confer it is distinction enough. But I am troubled in having to state that my physical condition (rather crippled legs) would compel me to beg the being excused from attendance. I fancy this would be a breach of your rules, and I cannot imagine the humble novelist to have a claim for exemption under any plea.

Let me thank you for your offer of hospitality. I feel the disappointment.—Very truly yours,

George Meredith.

To A. Sidgwick.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 28, 1899.

Dear Sir,—I beg to express to your Council that I shall always be deeply sensible of the honour conferred on me by the proposal for the high dignity of the degree, together with my regrets that my infirmity debars me from receiving it. But the titular honour and the bruiting of it I value less than your Council's good will, which gives me some sensation of pride in such work as I have done.

I shall miss, too, the pleasant half-evening with you to discuss the course of things current and foregone. Are you of good hope, as I am ? The atmosphere of Universities is rather overcharged with the calm Past, and has to be resisted.—I am, very truly yours,

George Meredith.

To Walter Jerrold.

Box Hill, Dorking, *June* 23, 1899.

Dear Sir,—You write so courteously that I am reluctant to speak of a dislike to being made the subject of a book. There is nothing to boast of in the feeling, and it may be put down to a form of prudery. I might claim that an unpopular author should be held exempt from exhibition. And again, the book of which he is the theme can hardly be expected to succeed. However, if you have material reasons of any sort for wishing to undertake this work, I would not stand in your way, as far as I am concerned.—Yours truly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Seymour Trower.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *July* 11, 1899.

There is for me no sweeter holiday
Than in this radiant season of the year
When by the Wey sits Lady BytheWey,
And League becomes pacific Gondolier.

But, my dear friend, I am daily more and more a cripple, and am deafish, part of my conversation being that horrid—EH ? It seems to me good that I should decline all invitations, even the pleasantest—and these partly for the sake of the kind friends who would still have me with them. Do not protest. Seventy-One is a burden to himself and others, a brittle Elm-tree to have near you. Decide to come to me and lunch, that I may have at least a couple of hours of the dear old time.—Ever most warmly yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Seymour Trower.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *July* 14, 1899.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Your wish to have me with you in spite of my condition would bring me, if the state were not so humiliating. You will not feel 'hurt' when you call to mind my gladness in the former days—and as far as heart is concerned it is the same and a far greater pain to me in restraining its leap than anything you can feel. On leaving the Plimmers, who were kind as you, I had the thought that I must make a conclusion to visits —I require too much attention, and hate to exhibit the need. Perhaps I am physically at lowish ebb for the moment. But judging of myself as I am, I know I do right in denying myself this great pleasure.—Come to me, for proof that you forgive your much afflicted, ever faithful GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Frederick Greenwood.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *July* 31, 1899.

DEAR GREENWOOD,—I have resisted all invitations. You will find me here open-armed to you for the day or days you name. I will save you from the dusty road, if you state the hour of your train. Your liking of the verses encourages. I see them in one place called 'obscure,' possibly because they are mine. There is much doing in the world for us to talk of, and as I am beginning to feel old in bottle, you will relieve me.—Ever warmly yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Edward Clodd.

August 3, 1899.

Thou pirate, nested over Alde!
Stern wrecker of the Established Faith!
From whom the parson shrinks appalled,
In whom the mariner sees his wraith!
Attracts thee in the gassy glare
Of evening some fishmonger's slab?
And still dost mix for supper fare
The shelly with poetic Crabbe?
Or else, while sinks the enlarging star,
Of night libidinous the herald,
Thou drink'st to glorious Omár
From the goblet named Fitzgerald?
Then into Nature's entrails peer'st,
Not finding there the Christian God;
Or on the surface pioneer'st
A bearer to thy fellows, Clodd?

Hither, I pray thee, be 't addressed
(Besides the crab and following pill)
Thy news; and when thou quitt'st the nest,
And when the visit to Box Hill.

To Frederick Greenwood.

Box Hill, *August* 8, 1899.

My dear Greenwood,—I have just read the Looker-on of July—the case of the Transvaal. It is the summary and exposition of a statesman. Good for the country if the writer were publicly that and carried authority! It should be shot abroad in form of pamphlets. If only the Times would be taught to write with such sober balance, we should be more respectable in the eyes of the world.—Yours warmly, George Meredith.

To Edward Clodd.

November 4, 1899.

Can you inform me whether the Boers have a laureate? If they have not, then we are heavily handicapped. I am at the end of the Vindication,[1] which flagellates with respectable temper and according to their degrees the notable clerical trio. The style of the History in this performance is curious to read. Even the birch will he wield in his best attire. I will return the book next week.

To Lady Granby.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Nov.* 5, 1899.

Dear Lady Granby,—You inspirit my hermitage with two most beautiful faces,[2] and must know that gratitude is my very breath. But let it be spoken. I am deeply thankful, not a little envious of your art, that can so royally bestow such great pleasure.

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[1] This refers to Gibbon's reply to certain critics of his famous chapters on Christianity. See 'A vindication of some pages in the xvth and xvith chapters of the *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*,' second edition.

[2] Reproductions of portraits by Lady Granby (Duchess of Rutland) of Lady Ulrica Duncombe (Lady Ulrica Baring), and Miss Pamela Plowden (Lady Lytton).

Believe me to be at your feet in homage, faithfully,

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Christopher Wilson.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Nov.* 25, 1899.

My dear Friend,—The mystery was a bomb-shell on the arrival of the Colchesters, and scattered our wits. Mariette called here. I gave her a dozen for a guess. But she made a dozen guesses and was no help. You were good to think of me. If you had told me of your health I should not be speculating still rather anxiously, though with some hope from the fact that you do not speak of it. About a week ago Mariette and I were talking of you and proposing to write or call. Accept some Box Hill violets, commissioned to breathe of my love. George Meredith.

To Lady Lewis.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Dec.* 12, 1899.

Dear Lady Lewis,—Your coming would have been like the sun over a snow-patched, hard-bound earth. I am still uncompanionable, though the fever has gone. You are beyond all Gerties in thinking of a visit to me, and when I can be a worthy receiver of blessings, I shall look for it. Meantime I trust to have a better report of you, that will let me know you are able to do the kind things you meditate.—Ever and all yours,

George Meredith.

To Lady Granby.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Dec.* 26, 1899.

Dear Lady Granby,—It is a noble gift,[1] and bears the charm to make it a constant pleasure with me. I could have wished for the full face of your daughter, giving eyes and the wild sweep of hair, as of a rivulet issuing from under low leaves of the woods—so I remember her. You have doubtless other sketches of a maid predestined to be heroine. I could take her for one. All the women and children are heaven's own, and human still, and individual too. Behold me, your most grateful

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[1] Reproduction of a portrait by Lady Granby of Lady Marjorie Manners.

George Meredith.

To G. M. Trevelyan.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 17, 1900.

Dear Mr. Trevelyan,—Your letter was one to be answered. You will have known that it could not have failed in giving pleasure to the man whose works had chanced to please you. Il y a le rapport. I should have written but for a partly disabled hand—and since my son and daughter took to marriage I am without amanuensis.—When I hear that I have been of some use to young men in aiding them to see the real life and guide their steps in it, I am content to think that I have lived. So you have refreshed me ; for it is just the doubt of this which now and then harasses men of my age in their retrospect.

If you are at any time near Box Hill and will do me favour to call on me, you shall be told of my politics and general views. I am rather beaten to the ground at present by the slain, wounded and sick of my friends under the brand of South Africa, in a war that a forethoughtful or even commonly prudent policy might have steered us clear of. We will leave the subject for discussion. I have been tempted to write on it, but am wiser in leaving it to the Journalists, who will say pleasanter things to our countrymen, and not see faults on both sides.—Very truly yours, George Meredith.

To a would-be Interviewer.

June 1900.

Dear Sir,—I have to plead illness for not having replied to your letter immediately. Believe me to be very sensible of the compliment you pay me in deigning to notice my works. I cannot refer you to any published account of the personal me. Our books contain the best of us. I hold that the public has little to do with what is outside the printed matter beyond hearing that the writer is reputedly a good citizen. Pardon the brevity of this answer, and accept my hearty thanks for the trouble you impose on yourself.—I am, yours faithfully,

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Duff.

Box Hill, Dorking, *July* 1, 1900.

My dear Mrs. Duff,—The loss[1] to me is past all count. For I see him, hear him, have him sitting in the chair beside me, as on the day before he left for S. Africa, promising to come here early on his return—and now I look at the hill that leads to Dunley, where is hollowness, a light gone out. But still it cannot be quite death for a man so good and true as he.—The unsuffering part of him lives with those who knew him. Nobility was his characteristic, and always where that is required in life, I shall have him present.—I feel deeply for Violet—indeed for all related to him. . . . I remember the many times and the words, when he spoke of his sister B. God bless and comfort you. Be sure that nothing good is ever lost. Remember, too, that your brother's friend is yours. George Meredith.

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[1] Written, on hearing of the death of Admiral Maxse, to his sister, Mrs. Duff.

To Miss M. A. Powell.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *July* 14, 1900.

DEAR MADAM,—Your little sketch, 'The Birth of Hope,'[1] is poetical and written in a prose that suits the theme. Your openness to criticism shows me that you are likely to gain the art of expression—one and the chief way to which is, the never writing until you are full of your subject. Then the right words come of nature. But avoid doing much of the kind you have transmitted. It may lead to an exclamatory style, as of the untended fountain, which spouts to subside, and a languor. Be sure, if you launch away from reality, that you can trust to imagination; and in the reverse case that you have your grasp of the facts. Transfer these counsels to practical life, and you will find them to be commonplace, but young writers may well bear them in mind. I wish you success, and am, very truly yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Arthur Spurgeon.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Sept.* 7, 1900.

DEAR MR. SPURGEON,—Let me thank you for the slips. The kind things written of me show how generous members of our craft can be. But as for my replying in printed form, there is inhabiting the public eye a lusty little devil, whom we would call Humour if he expressed himself pleasantly; and yet he spies on us in the humorous way. Suppose him to see me publicly declare my sensibility of the delicious flattery poured on me, would it not appear to him as a rubbing of the stomach and licking of the lips, in the style of primitive nature's gratitude for good things? So I hold it in reserve, and the genial

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[1] Referring to an article in *Great Thoughts*.

Whitefriars[1] will not misunderstand me.—Yours faithfully,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. J. G. Butcher.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Oct.* 8, 1900.

MY DEAR MRS. BUTCHER,—Pleasanter than gift of the birds was the handwriting on the label, for it seems an assurance that your father 's wearing into grandeur. Your husband's election is, I suppose, a certainty. Tory report speaks with fevered enthusiasm of his orations. He has not even to aim, they say, and the birds of the Liberal air come down in clouds. Impossible for me not to wish him well, for your sake. And they say you have canvassed with the lyric fervour of Colima, under control of Aspasia's persuasive argumentation. Riette gives me a capital account of Dorothy and the sprightly son. May all things prosper with them, and you, and everyone dear to you.—Warmly your friend,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Clement Shorter.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Feb.* 28, 1901.

DEAR MRS. DORA SHORTER,—It will sound as a paradox to you when I say, that the task you propose[2] would be the whiff of a breath if I held you less in esteem. I read your letter, and at once a procession of measured lines went through my mind, so prodigiously sententious that I may compare them to the steps of a 30 stone clergyman along the aisle to the pulpit, charged for the admonition upon our sins. But feeling sure of them, I did not transcribe; and next morning they had clean flown—which was as if an elephant of the columnar legs and pensive proboscis had soared into the blue. I will try at something lighter. Only, I beg, do not put me at the head of your regiment. Say, about third or fourth—unless we are to be located by seniority.—Yours most truly,

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[1] Members of the Whitefriars' Club, of which Mr. Spurgeon was then president. The letter refers to a visit of the Club to Box Hill.

[2] This refers to a contribution to an album of autograph writings collected by Mrs. Shorter.

George Meredith.

To Lady Granby.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 21, 1901.

Dear Lady Granby,—The fair face[1] has come, and out of the clouds, it might seem, for I scarcely dared expect it would be borne in mind that there was a petition for it. But you can be beneficent to mortals even in the period of a personal affliction. It is a reviving likeness, and as with all the portraits of beautiful women from your hand, there is the more than the beauty—on y voit l'âme dans les traits. That is the poetic touch. I would speak of my gratitude—it is coin of copper in exchange for celestial gold.—I am your greatly favoured

George Meredith.

To Arthur Spurgeon.

Box Hill, *March* 29, 1901.

Dear Mr. Spurgeon,—An attack of our March was disposing of me when your flattering and most pleasant letter came. There was melancholy in it for me: I had to reflect on my not being any longer the comrade worthy of such good fellowship as you generously offer. However, in the spirit I can accept it, and in that fine element you will know me a brother among the Friars, wishing them and that I were to help in it—amiable discourse, companionable feastings, together with the success in life which should come from attentive observance of the habits, practised maxims, and general procedure of Friar Clodd. Make known, I beg, my sense of the honour done me by the fraternity.—Most truly yours,

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[1] Reproduction of a portrait by Lady Granby (Duchess of Rutland) of Lady Katherine Thynne (Lady Cromer).

George Meredith.

To Edward Clodd.

Box Hill, Dorking, *April* 11, 1901.

My dear Clodd,—I have had four days in Hospital with my Doctor—nothing very serious. But I doubt my powers of entertaining, though you will animate me to some degree. So say on this occasion the Sunday (10th) I shall see you gladly, and hope you will make up in frequency for want of volume. There is great good news (lamented in Obituaries) of the press of applicants for places in the Bus.[1]—Ever yours,

George Meredith.

To Edward Clodd.

Box Hill, Dorking, *April* 18, 1901.

My dear Clodd,—The nipper has been gratefully received.

I must be the most unsuspecting of men. If I could have imagined that my letter to the Secretary would be printed, I should certainly have entered into details, telling of Sir Reynard of the Alde, the exposure of his tail at Burford Bridge, the establishment of the B. Bus as the preliminary to the most paying Company in Great and Greater Britain, and also an idyllic account of the night of the Aldeborough Crab. These instances would have proved the strong foundation of my encomium besides causing a rush of application for membership, to be associated with the indicative son of success. For instances are always wanted by an unimaginative public. As it is, my remark provokes mere curiosity.

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[1] The allusions to the 'Bus' refer to the appearance at nearly the same time of Mr. Clodd's memoir of Grant Allen and his monograph on Huxley. Meredith termed him 'Conductor of the Biographical Bus along the Necrological Tram.'

Health a little better, but weak, disconnected, little capable, a subject for the Bus I refuse to be placed in.—Warmly yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Frederick Chapman.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *June* 13, 1901.

DEAR SIR,—'Baffle the threat, bright scene . . .' We need a Wordsworth to protest against such a wrong as the violation of the view from Richmond Hill, which is in truth one among our national treasures. Happily the cry in defence of it has only to be raised in time, for it is a matter touching all of British blood who have some vein of poetic sentiment. Richmond Hill makes a more universal and brilliant appeal than Orrest Head.—Yours truly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the 'Author.'

July 1901.

Our Society has to sustain a heavy blow in the death of Sir Walter Besant; and, although vitality breathes from a bright example, such a loss may well seem to us at the moment irreparable. It is hard to speak of him within measure when we consider his devotion to the cause of authors, and the constant good service rendered by him to their material interests. In this he was a valorous, alert, persistent advocate, and it will not be denied by his opponents that he was always urbane, his object being simply to establish a system of fair dealing between the sagacious publishers of books and the inexperienced, often heedless, producers. How unselfishly, with how pure a generosity he gave his valuable time to the previously neglected office of adviser to the more youthful of his profession, may be estimated by a review of his memorable labours in other fields. They were vast and toilsome, yet he never missed an occasion for acting as the young author's voluntary friend in the least sentimental and most sensible manner. He had no thought of trouble or personal loss where the welfare of his fellow-workers was concerned. We have lost in him the very beating heart of our Society, and it is by holding his name in grateful remembrance that we may best hope to have something of his energies remaining with us. GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Lady Ulrica Duncombe.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *July* 12, 1901.

MY DEAR LADY ULRICA,—Herewith the book of Eckermann and Goethe. Read it by fits, little at a time. Now and then you may be smiling at your hero (notably where his later novel of the Lion tamed by the child with the flute is discussed), and you will rebuke yourself and insist on his greatness despite of this or that. Well, I will send you my essay on 'Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit,' wherein you will see that an accurate perception of foibles in those whom we love does not lessen the love, or perhaps even the reverence. It is only a vindication of our intellect—the seeing in what way our hero or friend or beloved is a little vanitous and pretentious, or not quite honest at the moment. Our good English know next to nothing of this most instructive and corrective of Spirits.—Have you a mind for political affairs? I trust you not to shun them: they brace the mind, are open air to it. I may help you, if you direct me as to the way. Do not write unless you are moved for communing. I say it against my own interests. But in truth boredom is a resulting certainty if we feel that the reply must be given. I could chatter to you for an hour or more, only I am advised by my inward monitor that you have occupations. And then there is the hope of your coming. There is a Fräulein Ulrica in the Goethe family.

To Mrs. Janet Ross.

August 27, 1901.

My dear Janet,—Here are my few words to form a pen portrait of the noble mother.[1] I have done the best I could, striving to be true to the original. You will not offend me by casting the sketch aside if it should not hit your taste.

L—— looked well, I thought, when she came here, but still the lines of sadness on the sweet face. I have my wishes concerning her, and they are probably yours.—Adieu, my dear Janet, and know me faithfully ever,

George Meredith.

To Lady Ulrica Duncombe.

Box Hill, Dorking.

. . . bow apart from viol is sheer naught, whereas viol is always potential music:—and she may add, if she is in the mood to whip him, 'for another perhaps to play on me more cunningly.' And, à propos, a writer of mark was here last week, and we laughed at recent maunderings in Reviews on Style. He and I gave definitions. Getting serious for a moment, I proposed: 'A noble manner in an easy manner.' He bowed to it. What inspired me but this instrument I play on now! For surely the sentence depicts her. So be reconciled to it.—You have asked concerning character: you have been reading Biographies. We cannot come to the right judgment in Biography unless we are grounded in History. It is knowledge of the world for the knowing of men. Question the character, whether he worked, in humanity's mixed motives, for great ends, on the whole: or whether he inclined to be merely adroit, a juggler for his purposes. Many of the famous are only clever interpreters of the popular wishes. Real greatness must be based on morality. These platitudes are worth keeping in mind. Mind while reading severely may be indulgent, unless baseness is shown. There is a philosophy of life for it to embrace—and that means the reverse of cynicism, to be tolerant of our human constitution. We have to know that we know ourselves. Those who tell us we do not know, cannot have meditated on the word Conscience. In truth, so well do we know ourselves, that there is a general resolve to know some one else instead. We set up an ideal of the cherished object; we try our friends and the world by the standard we have raised within, supported by pride, obscured by the passions. But if we determine to know ourselves, we see that it has been open to us all along, that in fact we did but would not know, from having such an adoration of the ideal creature erected and painted by us. It follows, that having come to this knowledge, we have the greater charity with our fellows—especially with the poor fellow the most exposed to our inspection. For this reason, I preach for the mind's acceptance of Reality in all its forms; for so we come to benevolence and to a cheerful resignation; there is no other road to wisdom. If I have any, it is all yours.—I could run on to you lastingly; but you would be scrupulous to read and would be wearied. This is not an enlivening letter. I might in conversing amuse a little. You will perceive that I am zealous to set you in a clear way on certain subjects, and you will know why. I am with all my heart, your most faithful, GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Lady Duff Gordon.

To Lady Ulrica Duncombe.

BOX HILL, DORKING, 1901.

. . . Your tentative opinion as to the suffrage for woman must run counter to ideas pillared around you. Tories, it is true, have recently conceived a notion that enfranchised women would support their cause, as the clerics do—and the hosts of women are imparsoned. Well, I would run the risk, prepared for my mauvais quart d'heure. After some taste of active life, their minds would enlarge—that is all we want: their hearts are generally sound.—What German lyrics win your praises, to the reminding you of the many-sounding sea? Surely it must be the sonorous tongue at the drum of the ear that subdues you. 'In Aachen in seiner Kaiserstadt,' we could not render effective in English, and it might come out of a trumpet. But it is ordinary prose. I know Goethe and Schiller, Heine, Geibel, Freiligrath, Lenau, and as to majesty, not much more than the trumpets do I find in them. Are you thinking of Georg Herwegh, or of the bards of the Befreiungskrieg? They were spirited, but Campbell's battle pieces surpass them. They are deficient in great images—the majestic to the mind:—as in the opening of a Choral Ode from the Trachinian of Sophocles (Roman letters):—To the Sungod

'Ou aróla nòx enargoména
Tiktei kateunásoi te phlogesomenai.'

To Mrs. J. G. Butcher.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Oct.* 1, 1901.

My dear Mrs. Butcher,—The child is remarkable. I hope she will be carefully trained (not pedantically and not made conceited by tasks for exhibition of her powers); left to run between tuition and wildness. It may be a precocious aptitude. The like has been seen and it passes. The humour gives me warmer anticipations, for quality is there, and that does not pass. If she has a big head, her present quickness is very promising.[1]

My love to Dorothy, the overflow to you.

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Wilson.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Oct.* 3, 1901.

My dear Friend,—There is no consolation that can be offered you under such an affliction. The blow has to be endured with submission. But one who loves you may come with the reminder that he is always near you, and bears part of what is your portion of good or ill. That is like the call of life about you, and may help to bring some sustainment. How well I call to mind the scenes at Headley! They are not dead. And the yielding of the breath is not extinction. If we love truly we hold with us those that have gone from sight. Believe in my constant affection.[2]

George Meredith.

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[1] Mrs. Butcher had sent him a verse written by a *child of* 13 *years of age* to her dog, a tiny black Pomeranian. This is the verse.

To Bertie Butcher, Egoist.

Truly this dog in mind hath soar'd to distances sublime,
Far, far beyond all human things—except at dinner-time.
Unbending, reticent and of demeanour most severe,
To blandishments of alien tongues impervious is his ear.
Wondrous in sooth it is to me—wondrous to one and all
To find his inner soul so great; his outer form so small.
Amid a crowd of worshippers, living his life alone,
In contemplation of the great and glorious *Number One*!
Bow down, bow down, ye lower minds—cursed who dares deride
This little dog composed of tail and little else but pride!—E.M.E.

[2] Written on the death of Mrs. Wilson's elder son, Christopher.

To Mrs. J. G. Butcher.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Oct.* 20, 1901.

My dear Mrs. Butcher,—It may be grained in this very remarkable child, or still no more than a mere wonderfully precocious talent. She has the music of verse. I have not seen any failure, either of redundancy or halting, in a line. She requires of course affectionate interest, but not such encouragement as the seeing her verses in print. That may have the effect of stamping her turns of expression on her mind, and words. But genius will in the end overcome anything. The two pieces you point to are excellent. I do trust that no noise will be made about Marigold for some years. . . . For your 'toujours perdrix' my thanks run to my last coppers.—Most warmly, George Meredith.

To John C. Deverell.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Nov.* 19, 1901.

My dear John of Verelle,—Your apples were a great boon to me, as I take one every morning. I would write to you myself, but I have an idle daughter near me (this is quite untrue.—Marie) to whom the work of an amanuensis serves as an expiation for the doing of nothing handsomely, per diem.—Anything coming from you is welcome. Now that I am writing I wish to tell you as my executor that I trust you will see I am cremated when my time arrives.—With love to her who has tolerated you so long, with such exemplary patience.—I am, with the same to you, George Meredith.

To Lady Ulrica Duncombe.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Dec.* 18, 1901.

. . . There is much for me to write of, now that I can believe you care to hear. With it are two Love stories, oriental, models of nobility of soul on the part of both actors, insomuch that no Ulrica will disdain the subject.—Have you come to a conclusion over the Rosebery speech? It was clever, timely, fit for the bid expected of him; but unwise in proposing disseverance of Liberals and Irish—who are so manageable, if the English would but try to comprehend them, and without whose numbers little can be carried.—The question of Home Rule shall be deferred between us, as I fancy you are of the Conservative mind on it. Generally you are open to all the winds of heaven in a surprising degree when one considers your berceau.—We pass through or along Calabria on our tour, and cross thence to Sicily. The main object then is to spend three days at Weimar on the return. Unhappily it has been overheard by the Herr Baron von Schinkenstein, and there he will turn up to a certainty. He professes the cult of Goethe, having heard that the Britannic fair one reveres him. Like his countryman found by Grimm jumping over chairs and tables, il abbrende à être vif.

To Mrs. J. G. Butcher.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Dec.* 31, 1901.

My dear Mrs. Butcher,—All happiness to you and yours for this New Year!—together with that wholesome confusion to your husband's politics which will pluck him back upon his native strength once more.

The Madeira apples were custardy and curious. Perhaps Eve would have fallen for them. I am not so sure about Adam. The pips furnish an agreeable entertainment. A high propulsion would enable them to kill. But can there be any liveliness in such hard little niggers to perpetuate the race.

Remember me very warmly to your father, and know me ever most cordially yours, George Meredith.

To Mrs. Edith Clarke.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Jan.* 12, 1902.

My dearest Edith,—The letter from Gladys fills me with grief for you. It is a blow to me. I can only pray for you that you may find strength ; and consolation for the moment there is none. These are the times when the soul is called on for what force it may have to bear the burden of life, knowing how light is the tenure with all of us, and that the beloved, truly loved, are not more than removed from sight. Love keeps them. You have the girls, who are yours and his. That thought has come to you, I am sure. It will help to restore you, as in a lesser degree will the sympathy of friends, when you see daylight again. I am unable to travel, or I would offer to be with you on Tuesday. Kiss the girls for me, thank Gladys. Be assured of my constant love for them and you.[1]

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Edith Clarke.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Jan.* 28, 1902.

My dearest Edith,—I should have written again, but feared the brushing of the wound. I think of you constantly. The return to work is the one specific for strength to endure the blow. Come to me whenever you feel disposed, and bring as many of the girls as you can. To them as to you my love, with my prayers for you.

George Meredith.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Jan.* 28, 1902.

My dear Morley,—Bring me the Rose of Patterdale. She is that still to poet and philosopher, forming the

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[1] On hearing of the death of Charles Clarke, Mrs. Clarke's husband.

Novelist, who knew her and bears the vivid impression which overflows present time. Say Friday, and name your train; my fly shall meet you. The return train is 8.40. Champagne of Veuve dry, vintage 1880.—It will revive me to see you both.—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Lady Ulrica Duncombe.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Jan.* 29, 1902.

Your having the feast of music is music to my thoughts. I see troops of vaporous cherubs and seraphs threading at the ears and thrumming at the chords of the inner chambers—wakening one that sleeps. You are not moved to melancholy by sweet sounds, for you are little given to nurse your senses. At times perhaps there comes a note to make you quiver, through memory. Occasionally you have a spark of imagination lighted, almost as much as it can ever be with Englishwomen. You are kindled more martially than amorously; not so much softened as elevated; whether to soar, I do not guess. Music lifts us by chance to the highest pitch of the senses; great poetry a stretch above, for it addresses us through the mind—the gateway of the spiritual, and is less purely emotional. Hence poetry is under-estimated in the comparison. Plenty of both to you is your friend's prayer. Clara Butt has a grand voice, they say. The contralto is heavenlier to me than the most upper-sky soprano. The two Goethe books are mainly summaries, a great deal of them mere radotage. Your eyes in traversing them at a glance will get as much as is wanted. On the whole, it will not be time wasted. Will you say of me that I am like the sagacious Frenchman, whose wife is bewitched by a brilliant actor or singer, when he takes her nightly to the theatre, and she is at first contemptuously grateful to the good man, until by sickening degrees the shams and tricks and ties in the arts of her magician stare at her, and she is reduced to call out for a holiday at a hamlet on the Breton coast. But if it is toujours Goethe, that is because I share the culte. Indeed, I fancy I should not have my place with you apart from this alliance. No, I have never written of Goethe. In my younger day Carlyle had the field. He commended the study of Goethe to me constantly, and wrote better of him than I should have done. Do you know his Goethe articles? You, womanlike, swallow your herb whole. He inclined to do the same, for he also was wilful in his adorings. I do worship the splendid stature clothed with wisdom; only I claim the right to smile now and then. It is not wholesome even for great men to be adored while they breathe. How he would have welcomed another Ulrica at his feet! Well, with you in that posture, I would not have smiled. Such is your influence. You bring the Wahlverwandtschaften home to me. . . . Morley, who dined here on Friday, says that Lytton, in seconding the Address, was considered to have acquitted himself well. Morley was in excellent trim, and we had that delightful give and take which I am so rarely blest with. A letter from him just received asks to renew the past. How I wish you had been present! It might be arranged for one of the days to come. He touches an unused chord of vanity in me by saying that Gladstone's doings among Italians caused him to re-read my 'Vittoria,' which he calls 'a glorious piece of work,' and as it contains some of my best writing, I can believe he liked it. His 'Gladstone' should be one of the great biographies. I have many things to write on, that I may help your young mind over certain of life's problems; they shall follow. At present I merely gossip—of myself, it seems, as is the way with chatterers. You, who do so too little, talk of 'wearing me with chatter,' and of my letters as a sort of condescension. It is formal, and formality is a part of politeness, and the politeness thus exercised signifies that a semi-stranger is addressed, and such the distance prescribed to him. The sophistry might be further worked out, and you would deserve it for adopting those phrases, when you have not to be told that I thirst for your speech, and that I write spontaneously, from the full heart, only restraining it a little. Superior beauty would not lessen in me an allegiance that is founded on mind and nature as well as person. I post a 'Débats' with an article by Leroy-Beaulieu, worth a glance from you. Why don't the writers in the Daily News examine and dilate on practical matters instead of harping hysterically on camps and breadstuffs. All of them seem to be suffering from a potent distillation of Cadbury's Cocoa, and living in Hothouses. You see the comic in people of mark, and faults in friends, and can still esteem them. So we join hands. Few have I known who had this capacity ; it has been my loneliness. How long do you stay in town ? I begin to think you care to decipher my scrawl, and I speculate on your next address. It was anticipated that the Coronation robes would set you in movement, and there must be zealous consultations with milliners. I have no contempt for such things ; just a bit of pity for the too eager in pursuit ; and I could swear that you are not of that woolly flock, or rather, ravenous shoal. Enclosed is my portrait of Lady Duff Gordon. Let me hear that she impresses you. If otherwise, the fault is mine. . . . GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *St. Valentine*, 1902.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I have a Greek Anthology with good notes, but not Mackail's. I think highly of his

'Latin Literature' (Introduction to). I have read Harnack's 'Monasticism,' and profitably: also some way into the 'Christianity'—an abler exposition than is common to the sermons of which it has the tone. You will certainly go through Rose's 'Napoleon': on the whole fairly balanced, leaning to favour the great man. His narrative is well sustained; the style flowing with its much matter: but he 'voices,' and has his 'that that,' and 'had had.' Even in a book of History the refinements might be practised.

You know my love for you both and will believe in my wish to see you soon again.—Warmly yours,

George Meredith.

To the Editor of the 'Daily News.'

Feb. 24, 1902.

Sir,—One who is neither for the Boer nor against him, and who thinks that the case of each party in the South African conflict has not yet been fully stated, claims a short space in your columns to join his voice with those now crying for the discarded 'quality of mercy.' It is England's good name that interests me. I remember the days before the now well-beloved Emperor Franz Josef was taught by sharp experience the virtue residing in benevolent acts, when Austria was denounced by our country from end to end for the ruthless hangings and shootings of rebels. Italians and Hungarians, free of their yoke, remember our sympathy of that clouded time. They are amazed to see this England guilty of the fruitless butcheries which dealt their recoil blow upon Imperial Austria. Such insensate inhumanity must be stopped, or Englishmen will have to learn that apathy in the season of evil deeds is not only a crime, but perceptibly written by history as the cause of national disaster.[1]—Yours, etc., George Meredith.

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[1] A plea for Kritzinger.

To the Editor of the 'Daily Mail.'

March 4, 1902.

There was no assumption on my part that a British Court-martial would condemn Kritzinger to death. The fear of it was roused by the previous shooting of prisoners —criminals according to military law, no doubt. But the application of the severest penalty of military law to the Boers fails in its invocation of justice, because it does not take into account the inferior civilisation of that people.

They were sons of the wilds, masters of slaves, Christians to whom the life and the agonies of a fractious black count for about as little as the end of a disabled horse.

In dealing with us they have been generally honest, though the old habits of warfare with carmined savages must needs come to the front at times, especially when their foe is showing himself the stronger.

Our men acknowledge them to be eminently brave. They are not likely to have the dread of death. Shall we then expect to terrorise them by the shedding of the blood of the condemned among them, and for deeds that they cannot understand to be criminal?

We are but steeling the remainder of their fighting men to more desperate resistance—a spectacle forebodingly piteous. It signifies also the further waste of our own precious blood.

Let it be borne in mind that the Boer has in him much of the stuff of Les Gueux, who did good work for the world against odds at a time when it was needed. If I am not mistaken, he is a descendant of those indomitable Lower Rhinelanders, who gave such trouble to the Romans, notably to Germanicus.

In dealing with him, having the hope to conciliate him, we must take his version of humaneness, or we shall find that we have been guilty of bad policy, the most exacting of a nation's creditors. GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Craigie.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *April* 1, 1902.

DEAR MRS. CRAIGIE,—Among the telegrams coming to me on a certain day, yours was sharpened with surprise. For though I bear in mind our meeting one welcome day, I did not imagine you to have so lively a memory. Or was it that a vigorous young sister in the craft was taken with a kindly feeling for her now mute old brother? In either case the greeting was most welcome. I wish it could be in person. But things are at such a pass with me, that all motion to that effect must be on the side of my friends.—Gratefully yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Countess Martinengo.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *April* 15, 1902.

DEAR MADAM,—How grateful I am to you for the gift of your noble book 'Italian Characters' you will understand when I tell you that it revives the first and greatest enthusiasm of my youth, when Italy's young heroes appeared at times to be falling hopelessly, and Mazzini, while his heart bled for them, never wavered in the faith he had that their sacrifices would lead to the Risorgimento. In that we have the main historical fact of the 19th Century. You may say proudly that you have helped to show how it came to pass.—Your most faithful servant, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Lady Ulrica Duncombe.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *April* 19, 1902.

It must be a strain of Norman or Northumbrian or Anglo-Saxon blood in Ulrica's veins, or the mixture of them, which will not let her be friendly with Diana. Strong imagination is required in the Teuton stock for a tolerance of the Celt. Goethe would have appreciated her. Women of distinction have been heard to say that they lived in her more than with their living fellows. Read again the scene of Diana and Dacier when she comes to him from the holding of Emma Dunstane's hand under the surgeon's knife. Courage of the highest is needed for a trial like that. She was capable of uttermost devotion to an object. She was uncertain when it was presented as an abstract idea. She was astray in the shock of pressing material claims, easily bewildered when plucked at by the sleeve. She was brave to flout the world by running with Dacier, but she hated intrigue. Frigidly censorious Teutons will often consent to intrigue, that they may preserve their position in the world, and assist in condemning the exposed. Diana wanted (without the wish for) a sturdy mate in her passage through life. She found him after shipwreck, and when she would have preferred some one like to herself, erratic that she was, unbalanced, in comparison with the steady Anglo-Saxon woman not yet found out. For is not the solid ground firmer than the foot upon it? Honour to the Anglo-Saxon!—at least until exposure comes. I give my sympathy to the stumbling human instrument of a possible progression. Have you read the letters of Lady Sarah Lennox? The history is instructive, you will know it. The wife of an ardent fox-hunter, she quits him for an amorous lord, and after a year retires to a penitential solitude, out of which she is drawn at last by a worthy man, to become the mother of the three Napiers. I follow her and am with her throughout; Ulrica the same, I am sure. By and by the world will smile on women who cut their own way out of a bad early marriage, or it will correct the present rough marriage system. No young woman knows what she gives her hand to; she will never be wiser until boys and girls are brought up and educated together. Let me add, until English girls have wiser mothers. Such donkeys are those dames in all our classes! It is true that the upper need not to give so much instruction where knowledge is in the atmosphere. A propos of Lady Sarah's story, an old Cornish lady told me of one ending differently. A hunting Squire of her neighbourhood had a very handsome wife, whom he valued less than the fox's tail. One of the Vivians eyed her, admired, condoled, desired, and carried her off. Some days after, she was taken with compunction or compassion, and about midnight the forsaken squire sitting in his library heard three knocks at the window. 'That 's Bess,' he said, and let her in. She was for weeping and protesting repentance (here Ulrica sneers), but he kissed her, taking the blame on himself, rightly, and the house was quiet. Old Lady Vivian, like many old ladies, had outgrown her notions of masculine sentiment in these matters; she said to my friend: 'What are the man's family making such a fuss about! My son only had her a fortnight!' Even young women have but a confused idea of the masculine sentiment of complete possession, down to absorption (Ulrica straightens in antagonism), and how it is to pursue them anticipatorily and retrospectively. I have tried in my time to enlighten them and humanise their males. The case of the unmarried young woman having to enlighten the suitor she loves concerning antecedents, and bravely doing it, I have treated in a ballad. But there are men who would behave more handsomely than this fellow did. Except in early youth, the confession is needless, the one question being: Does he love the woman. If he does, he has her nature and enough of her character in his grasp, and takes her for what she is, untroubled by facts. I am not speaking of the very young man. But see the Egoist. 'He takes her for what she is': that is, for her soul's worth, as a Lady Sarah, who has weathered some early gales and issued the stronger, to be mother of heroes. Those early gales, bred by nature within, as well as assailing from without, are common to all save the frigid or the tepid, and the austere in principle may resist, the motherly protected and the secluded escape them. The happy accident of the absence of opportunity has helped to the rescue of many eminent virgins at critical moments. There are forms of courage; Diana's was not of the steady and aye ready order, hers was elastic, uncertain in response except when facing extreme visible peril, of the call of devotion to a friend or to a lover. The courage elastic can be stretched to any length; but also it contracts, it may wear the appearance of craven, may be so now and again. The woman who must have a lover is of this kind. Has Ulrica sympathy to bestow on her? In the matter of love my benevolent Ulrica is indisposed to speak her mind, she is double dumb. She has known—must—something of it. That she will ever know, may be doubted, what a lady spinster of sixty, questioned by me, pronounced to be her predilection in poetry, bawling over shoulder 'Passion.' Much liking, warm liking, even wildish, but not passion. Hence, it may be, her coldness to the woman capable of it. So good-bye to Diana. She is one of the women dear to me, and I have tried to expound her to another much dearer. How comes it? I can only say that on the day of my friend's burial she sat beside me, and he gave me to her. Primrose Day. The association of primroses and Disraeli and the origin of the League (between Borthwick-Glenesk and Drummond Wolff) could have risen solely among people so grotesque as the English. But Dizzy's wit has the wonderful quality of being picturesque. A man related to me that he was in the House one night when the Parliamentary bore Chisholm Austen had been on his legs half an eternity, and he met Dizzy coming down the gangway, and said: 'You turn your back on your supporter?' Dizzy replied: 'I 've had enough of that Saracen's Head creaking in the wind.' Saracens' Heads used to be common as Inn-signs, and many a traveller must have heard them creaking through the long night hours. Could any illustration better describe the bore? I have not seen this printed and it should be.

I wish I were about in the world to give you communications more pétillantes. You should be in London now, and will hear and see and will excuse my staleness. I trust that your father's health has improved. Mine drags on as usual. No coup de foudre of late. I have had the vision of you shining salt in the sea-breeze and inspiring a grey Triton with the passion to enfold and bear you to his domain.

I have been reading some French novels, impishly slimy. A book to be recommended, I shall finish next week. It is on Tiberius,[1] whose character I have long thought was falsified by Tacitus. Please let me send it. I fear you think I rain books on you, and I want you to read History.

My Lady has Diana's brows,
Diana's deer-like step is hers;
A goddess she by every sign,
Then wherefore is she not divine?
She has no ears for lovers' vows,
For lovers' vows she has no ears.

Not to be outdone in the formalities, I beg to subscribe myself, with the utmost sincerity, yours affectionately,

George Meredith.

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[1] *Tiberius the Tyrant*, by J. C. Tarver.

To Lady Granby.

Box Hill, Dorking, *April* 22, 1902.

Dear Lady Granby,—Gladly would I be of the audience on the evening of your maiden oration.[1] My seventy-four years condemn me to exclusion in the flesh. Spiritually I shall be present. Men railing at women for an excessive domestic volubility, little thought of the valve their public speaking would serve for. All the old tales of women are going to be reversed. I send a small donation in the place of my small self. Do not dream of another attempt at these worn old features. You worship Rhodes? I would crown him, and then scourge him, with his crown still on him. For his work was good in extending English views, but he was impatient, and with his great powers did enormous mischief. I should like to have seen the sweetest of unfolding wild-rose buds in her bridal happiness.[2]—Devotedly your servant,

George Meredith.

To Edward Clodd.

Box Hill, Dorking, *April* 23, 1902.

My dear Sir Reynard,—The enclosed £1 is to help the family of the poor fellow drowned in the Alde the other day. Cole suggests immediate purchase of Life preservers. The bad news gave him exulting shivers at his escape. I back your Huxley throughout.

The Asparagus season has shot its first heads. Query follows. But nothing can be said for the Bordeaux. There has of course been a mad rush to the Bus. I have issued warning that all are not Huxleys.—Yours warmly,

George Meredith.

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[1] At the Artists' Benevolent Fund.

[2] Miss Pamela Plowden.

To H. W. Nevinson.

Box Hill, Dorking, *April* 25, 1902.

Dear Mr. Nevinson,—I was on my way for an introduction to Mazzini when his friend conducting me heard that he was stricken by the report of one of those catastrophes in the Italian land common at the time. So I was unacquainted with him, and I regret that I can be of no use to Mr. Bolton King, who is to be congratulated on having a splendid piece of work in hand. The Risorgimento is the greatest historical fact of the nineteenth century. Looking back on the blows and rebuffs of the old days, I am instructed to see that we may draw the hope of living juices from street orange peel in the mire. We were as that trodden castaway of times. I trust you are not giving all your hours to journalism.—Yours faithfully, George Meredith.

To Mrs. W. M. Meredith.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 2, 1902.

My dearest Daisy,—Your little note is a May Song to me, the first of the nightingales. I was sure of your courage—which means the good will in the right direction; and when the Heavens behold that they do their best to help it.

You have a liking for little phrases; I send you three:—Love is the renunciation of self. Passion is noble strength on fire. Fortitude is the one thing for which we may pray, because without it we are unable to bear the Truth.

Hail to your speedy recovery and my meeting with you.—Your ever loving, George Meredith.

To Leslie Stephen.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 6, 1902.

My dear Leslie,—Rumour comes to me that you are not in right condition. Comfort me in this respect, if you can. I have an imagination that enlarges anything of sombre tone that I hear of a friend. I remember now when you last left the Cottage here a pang of envy seized my legs at sight of your power to walk without leaning on an arm, as I must do. Let me hear that I may have the sight again and soon.—Yours warmly,

George Meredith.

To Henry Baerlein.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 7, 1902.

Dear Mr. Baerlein,—Herewith I return the Björnson Tales, of which the Fisher Lassie takes me chiefly. He is an artist, at times a poet, in description, fails in construction. It would seem that he does not think out his work before he starts. But I forgive him much for his vigour and raciness. I can believe that he is a faithful painter of Norwegian scenery and people. You have made me indebted to you by the reading of the book.—Very truly yours,

George Meredith.

To Edward Clodd.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 10, 1902.

My dear Sir Reynard,—Shall we say Wednesday next? Cole wishes to make a show of his asparagus for the Lord of the Alde, and these N. Easters have thinned the stalks, that should be big as thighs of kicking babes. There will be the bed for you and ever the welcome. Think nothing of the financial fall in the Bus shares. If you can get one Bishop on board, you have him. It is true that you will have to change the road. There is the crux for Sir Reynard—financial advantage or conscientious integrity. I speak of this because of your lamentation.

Reading Rogers's translation of 'The Frogs' with great pleasure.—Yours warmly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Leslie Stephen.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *May* 11, 1902.

MY DEAR LESLIE,—We two have looked at the world and through men, and to us the word consolation is but a common scribble, for there is none under a deep affliction that can come from without, not from the dearest of friends. What I most wish for you I know you to have, fortitude to meet a crisis, and its greater task, to endure. We have come to the time of life when the landscape surrounding, 'haec data poena diu viventibus,' the tombstones of our beloved and the narrowing of our powers, throws a not unpleasant beam on the black gateway, as we take it to be in the earlier days. And those young ones, whom Nature smites with the loss of us, she will soon bring into her activities, if they are the healthy creatures we wish them to be. I find nothing to regret in the going, at my age, and only a laughing snarl when I look about on the deprivations, which make the going easy. So I see things in your mind as well. If you can come in perfect certainty that the journey will be harmless, prescribe diet (soups and light puddings, I suppose), and don't kick when I say my fly shall be sent for you.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Miss Monica Meynell.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *May* 28, 1902.

MY DEAR MONIQUE,—You would not have written to me of the great good news[1] without having had sanction of the father and mother to proclaiming of it, therefore I can be with you all in rejoicing. It is the happiest time of life for you, my dear, however serenely royal the summer may be, for all your birds are now in song, all your garden in flower. Old though I am, I can enter into your fresh imagination, and it does not deceive, it is a rounded Kingdom, independent of the shocks of the coming life.—Ever your friend, GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Miss Meynell's engagement to Dr. C. W. Saleeby.

To Leslie Stephen.

BOX HILL, *July* 16, 1902.

MY DEAR LESLIE,—Association of any kind with you would be an honour and a pleasure to me. But I have no taste for distinctions, and I can hardly think that an unpopular novelist and unaccepted poet would make a fit successor in general esteem to your late V. P. Such names as J. Morley and Fred Pollock sound preferable. I must fancy that your personal inclinations move you to the present selection. Weigh the matter. If you still decide, and are not mistaken as to the general sentiment of the Committee, I am in your hands.[1]

I wish to press them. You will do wisely in shunning even the prospect of a visit here, if there is doubt of your strength. I can live with my friend in absence. Let me have your New Forest address. It is comforting news that you can work. I find the head is not failing me either. Love to the children and to you,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Lady Granby.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *July* 30, 1902.

MY DEAR LADY GRANBY,—I am under Fortune's evil eye. For usually on a Sunday I am here to welcome visitors from town, and in this wretched instance I had to pay court to a fair American at my daughter's place near by. So I have lost the sight of that enchanting Marjorie, and she remains for me like a verse in a romantic ballad. You were good, sweet and adorable to bring her. As to —— ——, I return his formal compliments in the prescribed politeness of one compelled to cross rapiers with him sur le terrain. Know me at your feet in homage. GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Refers to the vice-presidency of the London Library.

To Leslie Stephen.

BOX HILL, *July* 30, 1902.

MY DEAR LESLIE,—Please assure the Committee that I am very sensible of the honour conferred on me. I have rather conflicting reports of you. Miss G—— speaks of your not looking so well as on her previous visit. Herbert Paul says he has heard encouraging news. You may be in need of country air. I should like to have two lines from you after a week in the Forest. Vegetable and fruit dietary should be in the prescriptions. You may have doctors who know how to treat the case. I shall try a move of my legs to London when you return, if you can't come here. You are in my thoughts daily.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Leslie Stephen.

BOX HILL, *August* 18, 1902.

MY DEAR LESLIE,—I read your article on the lugubrious Young the other day, and was rebuked, for I could not have held so fair a balance. I remember how in my young time he sounded a bell in the night for me, and was Death's wisdom correcting our vanities—especially felt when we are under a disappointment. After seeing through him I conceived him as all humbug—always in error. In the George Eliot I could not have refrained from touches on the comic scenes of the Priory—with the dais, and the mercurial little showman, and the Bishops about the feet of an errant woman worshipped as a literary idol and light of philosophy. No stage has had anything so poignant for satire. I have to trust to your not being condemned to suffer. You are constantly with me.

George Meredith.

Give my love to the children. What is Thoby's taste in reading ?

To Miss Gertrude Lewis.

Box Hill, Dorking, *August* 21, 1902.

My darling Gerty,—You send me lasting sunshine. You have done well. And all the while when I saw you at Givons last—and admired, as you will remember—this great secret was beneath the grand hair-coil of the Patagonian Princess ! I might and I must have known that something was there. Certainly I was impressed. What a delight it will be to Riette ! We often said—but never mind. Theodore has vindicated the young men of his time by insisting. A young woman's No is meant to be stormed, and as well on an Ostend boat, when Neptune is at his jolliest, as elsewhere. I shall be glad to see your hero—whom, by the way, you ought to have brought to me for approval first. However, I 'm too happy for a word of blame.—Your loving George Meredith.

Thank your dear Mother for her letter.

To Miss Gertrude Lewis.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Sept.* 29, 1902.

Dear Bride,—They say that he is handsome. Beware of beauty in men. There is a report that he is clever. The combination of cleverness and beauty in men was never to the advantage of women. We hear of his intention to whirl you off soon after he has extinguished your name under his own. Be careful to lay a train of gunpowder from every residence you quit to the threshold of the one you enter. All this for your guidance. Be careful to keep the Dearie from the edge of the cliff. She was on one at St. Moritz; three Italian counts (Milanese, Umbrian, Palermian) waiting below to catch her. Rescued by an energetic friend and two bath-women. She has confessed to giddiness. Tell her I have a letter from Joan to-day.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Lady Ulrica Duncombe.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Autumn* 1902.

. . . Haldane, staying with Riette for a couple of days, came here on Sunday, and pleased me by talking of (one) whom he appreciates, backing her in all her acts. We agreed in lamentable views of the condition and prospects of our country. People may seem astir, they are only half awake. On Thursday F. Greenwood comes, and I shall have another melancholy feast of forebodings. On no other subject am I pessimistic. I foresee a saddened heart for Ulrica reading her 'Times' in days when I am insensible to buffets. For forty years I have borne this weight of apprehension. Some young men of the Universities show signs of life. G. M. Trevelyan writes for my stated approval of a new Review that will speak boldly upon England's needs and deficiencies, and be patriotic, as he implies, by taking a wider embrace than common patriotism. We have to think beyond the purse and the hearth if we would have them secure. Of course I wrote the words he wanted. The lucky fellow is off by way of Tyrol to the Carpathians, and takes, he says, the Duel in the Pass, in 'Vittoria,' en route. How I could pray to show you the scenes of Vittoria's wanderings with Angelo Guidascarpi over the sub-Alpine heights from Brescia to Bormio, and away to Meran in the Adige valley. I was there when, though liking the Austrians, I burned for Italy. I fancy I did justice to both sides. The young poet Laurence Binyon has written to me for permission to make use of the story of the Guidascarpi for a drama he has been commissioned to compose for Mrs. Patrick Campbell: prose, a harder task in English than in French. Few Englishmen can write a resonant prose dialogue that is not blatant; and when avoiding those alarms, they drop to flabbiness. It is merely to say that Style is rarely achieved here. Your literary hero, lecturing on Style, may have a different opinion. The prose in Shakespeare and in Congreve is perfect. They have always the right accent on their terminations. Apart from Drama, Swift is a great exemplar; Bolingbroke, and in his mild tea-table way, Addison, follow. Johnson and Macaulay wielded bludgeons; they had not the strength that can be supple. Gibbon could take a long stride with the leg of a dancing-master; he could not take a short one. Matthew Arnold was born from the pulpit and occupied it, and might have sermonised for all time, but that he conceived the head of the clerk below to be the sconce of the British public, and that he must drum on it with an iterated phrase perpetually to awaken understanding. However, although I consider it unlikely that I am in accord with your lecturer, I will own that I am beside the mark in addressing you upon a thing he will have handled more effectively. I dread the presentation of any of my works on the stage. Here is another American actress applying for permission to dramatise 'Diana.' I must let her know that Ulrica dislikes the character. Ulrica, she will say, is very English. Yet Ulrica says of herself, that she has imagination. Then she ought to be able to enter the breast of a passionate woman, a wife widowed, in love, much needing to be on her guard against the man, ready to fly with him, hating to intrigue ; and while she totter in this juncture, assailed by monetary needs, vain of her touch on political secrets, subject in a crisis to a swoon of the mind—mark that, O imaginative lady ! for there are women and noble women, who stand unpractised and alone in the world, liable to these attacks, driven for the moment back on their instincts : cannot Ulrica compassionately, if not sisterly, realize the position? No, I see her affecting meditation upon it with the bosom of a rock under her balancing air, or say a person called on by his Lord to be just toward one who has impugned his creed. 'She behaved basely.' But she was physically and mentally unaware of the importance of the secret. 'She ceases to interest me from that instant, and in the comparison of her deeds, her consideration for her virtue sickens me.' Better if that had broken down, by the accident of things, and obviated the other ; but be charitable and accept the good in her—'I can't.' Even so the parson with the infidel. I had intended writing a lecture this time on one of the deep themes of Life, that might help to rational views. It shall come. You are not to be bothered about replying. Evidently you find it a burdensome duty. Just now with your Coronation robings and arrangements, it would task you ; the reading of letters as well, till the panting fortnight after England's greatest event has gone by. I have to trust that you will bear the fatigue of the day. George Meredith.

To Mrs. Seymour Trower.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Oct.* 22, 1902.

My Friend among the very dear, your generous challenge would have had a reply, between a sneeze and a cough, but that I thought you to be with Britain's volunteer Admiral telescoping off our East coast for signs of the German Fleet. A slaughtering cold has laid me flat, and I am still weak and worthless, only just able to receive the visitors who care for me. So unless you and the Gondolier can be moved to come we shall not meet for some time. I had work on hand, but can do nothing except read. Love to you both.

George Meredith.

To Professor James Sully.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Nov.* 14, 1902.

My dear Sully,—Your disposition in dealing with a subject is to exhaust all about it. Except your reader, in the present instance. And he is reported to have been born with a smile on his redness. Such too will be the case with the world when he takes his smiling departure. On the theme of laughter, you should have dealt with the great stomach laugh of the English—on which they found their possession of the sense of humour. A chapter would not have been too much for it. The book, even with this omitted, will spread enlightenment.[1]—Yours warmly, George Meredith.

To Walter Jerrold.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Nov.* 27, 1902.

Dear Sir,—When eulogy runs high the subject of it is tasked to make a fitting response. But you have a note of fervency, and there is evidence of the close reading of my work, for which, as for the book, I must thank you. The fear with me is, that it will not be of material advantage to the writer or the publishers.—Yours very truly,

George Meredith.

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[1] *An Essay on Laughter.*

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Nov.* 28, 1902.

My dear Morley,—Name any day next week, and state the hour of train. My fly shall meet you. The prospect of your coming is May-day in this gloom.

Your books (Creighton and Harnack) are returned by train to-day. I am reading Vandal's 'Avènement de Bonaparte'—tiresome but necessary iteration of miseries, under the Directorate, so that B. appears for the time an angel intervening.—With all my heart to you both,

George Meredith.

To Miss Gertie Lewis.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Dec.* 1, 1902.

Dearest, cooing, cushat Gertie,—One word of my blessing on you before you emerge from the chrysalis of Lewis into the Birnbaum butterfly. Would that I could be present! Report speaks wonders of Katie's whip of the population of all Parties to witness the giving away and the taking. It cannot of course be so grand an affair as hers in the day to come, when we shall see all London's vanquished Handsome's Cabmen in long procession trooping to the ceremony. But will the distinguished man be as eminently hopeful? Will she be as proud of him? Rejoice that therein you are likely to be unrivalled. May God be with you through life. George Meredith.

(A few violets; please wear.)

To Leslie Stephen.

Box Hill, *Dec.* 2, 1902.

My dearest Leslie,—There is a report that you will be in the hands of Treves this week. You could not be in safer, and I am sure of your courage. But if some one of the family will send me word of your state I shall be thankful. You know how much my heart is with you. We both know enough of the accidents and the tenure of life to be able to bear a cheerful front to whatever may befall us. I remember making my good man laugh weapon in hand the moment before he went to work. Think of your Alps and Surrey hills, and of me with arms outstretched to greet you—as I trust they will be on a day having you in sight.—Ever your most loving,

George Meredith.

Sully with perspiring brow digging for the source of Laughter is provocative of his theme.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Dec.* 4, 1902.

My dear Morley,—The fly will be at station for 1.17 train on Saturday—a good day for me. The regret is, that it is for so short a time. I could devour weeks with you.—A letter from Leslie Stephen. His day with Treves next Wednesday. I have been going through it in advance. He has the starry philosophy—above terrestrial shocks.

To Leslie Stephen.

Box Hill, *Dec.* 30, 1902.

Dearest Leslie,—Vanessa tells me of a good advance to recovery. As I have gone through the whole business with you, I feel personally restored. This week, I trust, you will be released from the bed. Oh the bed! I was, in my drear time, revolutionary in it after the third day. You will not be like S——, the artist, who to my condolence replied—'Never was so happy in my life!' Bailiffs had been after him for thirty years, and in bed he lay smiling. You may have heard of Sully's new Study that will issue in a Treatise on the origin, scope, uses and Prospects of Laughing Gas. He has applied to several ladies near their time, for the discovery of how far it affects the infant at birth. Much will depend on whether it grins or shows signs of melancholy, and there will be hourly dating. The pursuit of this investigation has affected our Professor oddly. He bursts out with ha ! ha ! at the commonest remarks, all are jokes to him, at the same time that he thumps his desk to insist on the grave importance of this question. You may have heard all about it from him before now. Morley dined with me the other day, and was in grand condition: close at the end of his Gladstone. One of the books to read, at all events. Gladstone divides me. Half of him I respect deeply, and the other half seems not worthy of satire. We may anticipate that Morley will hold his balance.

I shall not look for answers to letters. One of the girls or Gerald or Mrs. Leo Maxse will keep me informed. Riette calls for news of you on Wednesday or Thursday. She hardly hopes to be allowed to see you. I would I had only the chance of knocking at the door.—Yours with all my heart, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Editor of the 'Daily Telegraph.' [1]

Feb. 17, 1903.

We should be grateful to the Germans for their crusty candour in telling us of their designs upon us. They stir a somnolent people, and, without stooping to regard them as enemies, we can accept them as urgently stimulating rivals, whose aim is to be the first of the world powers, chiefly at our expense. The Kaiser, an estimable gentleman, but not yet a fully-tried sovereign, has drawn in a deep breath of briny air, and would give it out in warships. Germany, once foremost among the nations for intellectual achievements, now spouts Pan-Germanism over Europe, and seeks to command the North Sea. For our part, we have only to take the warning they give us, and be armed, stationed, and alert. That is the way to preserve the peace. For Pan-Germanism challenges many foes, and a Power ambitious to be preponderant in a great Navy as well as a great Army will find its adversary within, besides those that press around it. A slumbering England will offer it the chance it craves before the inevitable financial strain brings it to the ground. A watchful England may look on calmly for that certain issue.

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[1] On the occasion of the North Sea Conference.

To Harold Owen.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 8, 1903.

Dear Sir,—Your 'Three Octobers'[1] give signs of sound judgment, and are, permit me to say, well written. The large use of metaphor bewilders the public, and leads to the idea that imagination, his best servant, commands him. That is what I gather from considering the possible effect of your brochure. The views of the conflict prove that though you may have felt for the Boer you were not his dupe, as many sympathisers have been. At the same time, he might with his fangs drawn, have been left free. Shorn of the mines, he would have been harmless, and we should have had a clearer name before the world.

To Herbert Trench.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 29, 1903.

My dear Mr. Trench,—The name of your convives are those of the men I should have liked to meet and have wished to know. As it is, I am doomed to sit here and conjure them to the mind. If you could persuade three or four of them to join you when weather is summerly in dining with me, you will do me one of the good services. The dining hour, a ¼ to 7, enables you to catch the 8.35 train back with comfort.—Meanwhile I may perchance have a visit from you before, and hear of their decision. —'The Questioners' does appease the craving of our over-flattered ear for rhyme without supplying it—an achievement. 'The Shropshire Lad' is a revelry of naturalness.—Yours in all fellowship,

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[1] A pamphlet, written by Harold Owen, a member of the staff of the *Manchester Guardian.*

George Meredith.

To Lady Ulrica Duncombe.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 29, 1903.

It is a matter of surprise (among unphilosophical people) that she who was placed high as the celestial blue above the Smart Set should on her return from India have adopted their tone and style in regard to the expedition. All of them say they will not 'bore' their friends and minor acquaintances with a single word of descriptions on impressive India and Durbar? Oh, much the same as a trot up and down Piccadilly with elephants for omnibuses and curtain-coated rajahs for breeched cavaliers, etc. Well, it is a way to smother imagination and kill youth. One sentence of a dozen words would have been enough. We have to suppose that the lady's mind was a blank, her heart a mechanical beater, her indisposition to 'bore' a blind to such sad facts. And then we are dragged back into formalities with the question, will she be welcome here? The answer to which is in her heart and mind, if they be still resident.—Very sincerely,

George Meredith.

To A. M. Monkhouse.

Box Hill, Dorking, *April* 9, 1903.

Dear Sir,—Your 'Love in a Life' held me fast in the reading, and will be remembered. Axon seems to me the best presentation fiction has given of the young political logician, who can make a sacrifice of himself without heroics. He is interesting and credible. Nora Blake is as good a figure. They could not have come together except for misery; and their passages together are well shown as having taught her to use her mind. I hope for the book to make its mark, with a fear that the inflexible sincerity will tell against it.—Yours truly,

George Meredith.

To Mrs. J. G. Butcher.

Box Hill, Dorking, *April* 16, 1903.

My dear Alice Butcher,— . . . These young women, when they determine on an independent course, obey a healthy impulse in their natures, and are promising well for the future of the race.

I can even feel the loss a Mother looking for companionship and immediate sympathy must sustain when I say that it should not be left to remain a wound, and I have confidence both in your heart and your clear head. You will see it to be a matter of character—which is full of better things to come than if the girl were quiescent.

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Craigie.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 15, 1903.

My dear Mrs. Craigie,—Let me expect you when you return. We were both struck down at the same instant. And still I can hardly hold a pen. It was a grief to me to miss my introduction to Miss Daisy Leiter. My daughter, Mrs. Sturgis, proposes to lighten your journey hither by meeting you at Leatherhead, so that you may not have the scramble for lunch when you visit this wreck of man. Then she will drive you to me, and away. Please, consent. . . . And I shall look forward.

Read ' Jacq ou le Croquant ' on your travels. It does for French country life what George Sand was too poetical to do. Adieu. GEORGE MEREDITH.

To W. M. Meredith.

BOX HILL, *May* 16, 1903.

MY DEAR WILL,—Daisy was here on Sunday. Margot could not come owing to rain. Our country with the open beeches is lovely, but I heave a sigh for the scenes about you, and my hope is that you may soon tell me of gathering ability to enjoy them. . . . Don't read or sketch at night. Early to bed is the rule for you ; and take a pleasure in (for the present) merely observing and reflecting on what you observe. It will, besides helping to strengthen and refresh the body, enrich the mind more than any number of recorded impressions with pencil and ink.—I wish you could have some mountain air. Train to Turin, then Verona, then to Bozen in Tyrol will bring you to the foot of a mountain, in which is an excellent hotel, where Clodd stayed last year, and he speaks of pinewoods and a pretty lake, etc. The air divine. A week there should be restorative—always assuming that you have yourself in custody. Towns, even Florence, would not suit you so well just now.—Write soon, but briefly.—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To G. M. Trevelyan.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *June* 6, 1903.

DEAR MR. TREVELYAN,—The country is in need of such a Monthly Review [1] as your sketch of the Prospectus proposes in outline. On the material side, we are now in a race with trained athletes, and are a pursey people still at the banqueting board. On the spiritual, where ultimate success resides, we require renewed awakening to the fact that it is more than a race with men. May your Editor conduct you wisely, and keep this Review from being the dupe of its virtue, as is commonly the case with Institutions that make a stand.

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[1] *The Independent Review.*

My envy will dog your wanderings over the Sub-Alpine land and the Carpathians. You will be welcome here when you return—of which, pray give me note.—Warmly yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To G. M. Trevelyan.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *June* 25, 1903.

DEAR MR. TREVELYAN,—Now that I am more companionable I can ask you to fix on a day for my introduction to the fair well-chosen who has chosen so wisely. My one regret is, her long journey for so small an object. If the daughter of Mrs. Humphry Ward, she carries a royal warrant wherever she treads. —— has the option to bring his betrothed next week. I look with great contentment on this flush of unions, as promising a good future for an earth to which I must soon kiss my hand.—Yours, with my salutations to the young lady,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Leslie Stephen.

BOX HILL, *August* 6, 1903.

DEAREST LESLIE,—I can at last manage with a pen. Your letter to me told me nothing of yourself. One word now may control my anxiety, as I do not see you, and there is no prospect of it. All through my time of lying in the bed I had you near me correcting my impatience.

Tell me where you go with the children this year. Riette is on a mountain of the Valais ascended from Moerel—not the Aeggischhorn. I don't know the name. Sir Ernest Cassel has built a villa on it, 200 yards from a glacier, whereon she has disported. She leaves for St. Moritz by Andermat and Thusis. I am acutely sensible of nodding age in the contemplation of her. Do you feel such accounts from these young ones? Philosophy comes to me five minutes later.—Your loving

George Meredith.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Oct.* 12, 1903.

My dear Morley,—If you can spare time to dash off a line, please let me know of your health. Since we lost Maxse, I am shaken with alarms when I hear reports of friends.—We are in ugly times, but it is not in me to cower under a cloud.

My love to your wife, of whom, too, I shall be glad to hear.—I am always your George Meredith.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Oct.* 17, 1903.

My dear Morley,—The report is tolerably favourable, and I am relieved for a time. That compulsion upon the Parliamentarian to harangue publicity, at periods frequently, is a killing burden. You excel in it while you are about it, but I feared the payment to come, though the flattery of being told in each assembly, in sweet and manly English music, that you are

A jolly good fa-el-low,
whichnobodycanden-y!

caresses ear and heart.—I have been reading Bury's

Roman Empire. He is a competent historian, and man of judgment, yet he would vindicate Justinian's Imperialism at the cost of the people's misery under grinding taxes to furnish means for war, by pointing to Italy recovered, etc. etc. :—and, as the result of the emperor's death, Italy, Africa, Gaul (Provincia), Spain, fell away from the East Empire, the state of Imperator was loathed by the people, despised by the barbarians. No, not a step should Imperialism take before it has cleansed and fortified itself within.—I have read odd numbers of your 'Cromwell,' and shall take to the book gladly.—Love to your wife. GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Nov.* 1, 1903.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—Your 'Oliver' is a delivery from the Bench, in a Court where has been a raging of distempered advocates. The summing up is a statesman's. It refreshes and calms, like a mountain's prospect. The book is a model for the tone of good History. It may be objected, that as you rank the great man's generalship at the highest of his powers, you do not give a closer view of the battles. Probably the scenes were unvisited; and imagination has much to do with the conjuring of them before our eyes, even when the field is plain.—Now for the 'Gladstone,' I hope you are in the condition to work cheerfully though for the time condemned to silence. I hear that you are in good hands—Simon's. The prescriptions are rigorous as to diet? I shall be relieved by hearing of improvement.—With love to your wife,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

Leslie Stephen to George Meredith.

22 Hyde Park Gate, S.W.

My very dear Friend,—I must make the effort to write to you once more with my own hand. I cannot trust to anybody else to say how much I value your friendship, and I must send you a message, perhaps it may be my last, of my satisfaction and pride in thinking of your affection for me. Your last bunch of violets is deliciously scenting my prisonhouse.—Always your

L. Stephen.

To Leslie Stephen.

Box Hill, *Feb.* 14, 1904.

My dearest Leslie,—Your letter gave me one of the few remaining pleasures that I can have. I rejoice in your courage and energy. Of the latter I have nothing left. Since last September I have not held a pen, except perforce to sign my name. It seems that I was near the end—' within view,' my London doctor said. A meddlesome fellow thought himself professionally bound to practise an injection on my arm, and the heart was roused to resume its labours. So here I am, of no use to any one—even unable to take the chance of seeing you. I have been at Givons with Mariette for four months and more, and return to Box Hill in March. Vanessa's reports of you have kept me in touch with the house. We who have loved the motion of legs and the sweep of the winds, we come to this. But for myself, I will own that it is the Natural order. There is no irony in Nature. God bless and sustain you, my friend. George Meredith.

To Miss Vanessa Stephen.

BOX HILL, *Feb.* 23, 1904.

MY DEAREST VANESSA,—Heaven has blest us by making the end painless. It was inevitable, I knew, and I had the shock of my grief when I was told of the malady. One of the most beloved of my friends has gone from sight, and though I feel that he remains with me and has his lasting place in our literature, this day's news darkens my mind. Last Autumn I was near to going. The loss of my friend spurs the wish that I had preceded him. He was the one man in my knowledge worthy of being mated with your mother. I could not say more of any man's nobility. If it were possible for me to move I should be among you to-morrow. May you be sustained. My prayers are with you all.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *March* 25, 1904.

MY DEAREST MORLEY,—Your coming (both) was breath of life to me. Not going out into the world, I need speech now and then with one whose head is on the heights. G. Murray's note to you was pleasant reading. The lady who speaks of a greatest, should be told that such a creature was never seen in the world at my time. He can always be challenged.—I muse upon Disraeli in your hands. You were inspired by Gladstone's character. Disraeli's intellectual agility would do hardly less for you. It was constantly alert, and would keep you at that mark.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

And my love to her of Patterdale.

To H. W. Nevinson.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 30, 1904.

Dear Mr. Nevinson,—Last year I had a visit from Stead, and I was so simple-minded that I took it for a friendly visit. I now see the interview reported, and in a masterly way, in the 'Rev. of Reviews,' with a splendid caricature of my person. You intend nothing of the sort. But it has followed that I now receive applications from Liberal papers for the expression of my views, when for the most part I have given them. The short-hand writer has been refused. In your case I might consent, if I were at present in a condition to talk for a while. At another time, supposing any need for a word from me, we might discuss things. Our Clodd has done his spiriting badly, if he has not told you that we talk of your work in Journalism and Literature.—Very truly yours,

George Meredith.

To Mrs. A. E. Fletcher,
The Dorking Women's Liberal Association.

'At this present time women need encouragement to look out upon affairs of national interest, and men should do their part in helping them to state publicly what has long been confined to the domestic circle—consequently a wasted force. That it can be a force men are beginning to feel. That the exercise of it is an education we see already in the enlargement of their view of life and of the country's needs. So there is hope that the coming generation will have more intelligent mothers. This holds true whatever side in politics they may take, and it is the main point.

'We who believe in Liberalism do not doubt that as their intellect expands and sharpens they will join with the party of progress, which, without rejecting such wisdom as was given by our forefathers, aims at a condition of things in harmony with the wider and deeper knowledge we have won, the nobler ambition, the more human interest in the welfare of our fellows. Accept my assurance that my wishes are heartily in accord with the movement you are about to make.

'By studying public matters diligently you will soon learn to perceive that there is no natural hostility between the sexes. Their interests are one when they have learnt to step forward together. It is amongst the lessons devolving upon them to teach the male kind who are not yet enough enlightened in that direction.'

To H. W. Nevinson.

Box Hill, Dorking, *June* 7, 1904.

Dear Mr. Nevinson,—I am recovering slowly from an illness that struck me down last year, and I should have written to you if I had thought myself fit for the nervous strain of speaking to be reported. For such it appears to me in my present state that the effect of an official interview would be. Personally you are always welcome. We might have a chat some time later, and then you could print my opinions upon this and that incidentally. Whatever they may be, I am not of a mind to think that my name would carry weight for them with the country. Generally I am with the Liberals, but I do not always take Party views. The independent person is not held to be worth a hearing in times of excitement.—Yours very truly, George Meredith.

To Edward Clodd.

Box Hill, Dorking, *June* 19, 1904.

My dear Sir Reynard,—I wrote to Nevinson 'some day,' hoping that I should be more up to the mark. I wish I were. However, I am in your toils, and experience tells me that they relax not, struggle as one may. Let the 23rd be named. I fear much, to judge by my present state of emptiness, your visit will give you but a wizened old hen instead of the plump pullet you look for whenever your sagacious nose is laid to earth. Say lunch 1½ P.M. if that should suit you. No short-hand!—Yours warmly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Sturgis.

July 30, 1904.

MY DEARIE,—Peacock Hall[1] takes its name from a wall-paper, showing the bird of magnificent tail, in the contemplation of which you are to forget the total absence of sea-view or proximity to it. You drive for a quarter of an hour on the road and then behold the blue element. It is refreshing. Then there is a way down a narrow lane for my chair, ending in mounds of shingle. We roll over them to hard wet sand, puddles, and veins of water. No esplanade, nothing but shingle. Cudlow comes not near it. We are on reclaimed marshland. The inhabitants escape in July and August by letting their houses to people pre-destined to be fly-blown in their ardour for sea-breezes. It is all very cheery. And it is to last for six weeks minus five days. We sigh for the days with Sandie.[2] Shall we ever have them again?—What picture papers we can get shall go to Brittany. May you have no disappointment. Love to my little ones and to you and to Harry. Love to Sandie.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Taken by Meredith with his son, his daughter-in-law, and children, for six summer weeks for the sake of sea air.

[2] Sandie, an Aberdeen terrier, of which Meredith was very fond. Its master, Mr. J. O. Sturgis, lent it to him, and it lived at Box Hill, except on the week ends when it returned to its master at Leatherhead.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Oct.* 11, 1904.

My dearest Friend,—Again it is 'Farewell to you,' and after so many years the love and the trust are the same. I see the misty river, the bespattered wharf, the tug and the Looming steamer about to bear away a treasured life into the unknown. May the return be as before! There is no reason why not, but apprehensions are always active at such a time. Roosevelt may have much within him. He is largely on the outside, so that there does not seem a world to study within. He and Porfirio Diaz have my chief admiration as rulers of men—States. You will see Mr. John Hay and appreciate him as one of the noble Americans. I met him once at Maxse's table, and remember with regret that I talked more than he did. I hope that now I am not so led away by the fiery moment.—It will be a great experience for you to walk over America instead of under it. All blessings of earth be with you, and a safe coming back to him who loves you, and would give up a good part of his time for breathing to see you here safe. My thoughts and feelings will be the same as your wife's.

George Meredith.

To R. S. Rait.

1904.

The testimony given without exception by the whole of our press to the merits of York Powell, is a memorable instance of the impress of character made by a noble man upon those who at one time viewed it with some distrust.

In France and Germany it was no novelty for a man of great learning and a distinguished professor to be in open sympathy with conspirators against the lords of misrule. York Powell succeeded in teaching his countrymen that the generous feeling for oppressed peoples may go side by side with the students' labours, that hunted exiles, subsequently to become transfigured as martyrs and heroes, are to be taken to the hearts of the thoughtful and most eminent among us during their term of peril under obloquy. For this, even more than his accomplishments, I prized him and hold him in my dearest memories. As a friend he was invaluable; always instructive, if need were, yet more willing to listen than hold forth. When he had to correct a blunder it was done flowingly, as a necessitated pump along the road of conversation, never in the manner of the irritated pedant. He could not let the error pass, but he had no frown for it. I could write pages in praise of the comrade he was, the splendid gifts I knew him to possess. I am stayed by conjuring up his shake of the head at any personal word of eulogy.

To Mrs. Simons.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Nov.* 17, 1904.

Dear Madam,—The condition of the union of men and women is so delicate a subject that a mere touch on it, in the form of a suggestion, rouses an outcry from the whole army of Mrs. Grundy. Yet that powerful person might reflect on the number of Divorces, and consider that when distaste is between the couples, it is worse for the offspring. Happily there is a majority of marriages where the two jog on contentedly—with, however, too great an indifference to the minority. So we have a figure that presents a tolerably fair front to the world, and is conscious of spots on an irritated skin. All I have suggested is for the matter to be discussed.—Yours truly, George Meredith.

To R. M. Leonard.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Dec.* 4, 1904.

Dear Sir,—I had seen your article in the 'D. Chronicle,' and was glad to think of one who entered into—shared, I should say, my feeling for Nature, and how to enjoy what she offers. The spin of the blood is one of the main secrets of it; otherwise we breed as the stagnant pools do.—Yours truly, George Meredith.

To Hugh W. Strong.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Jan.* 1905.

Dear Sir,—Since I began to reflect I have been oppressed by the injustice done to women, the constraint put upon their natural aptitudes and their faculties, generally much to the degradation of the race. I have not studied them more closely than I have men, but with more affection, a deeper interest in their enfranchisement and development, being assured that women of the independent mind are needed for any sensible degree of progress. They will so educate their daughters, that these will not be instructed at the start to think themselves naturally inferior to men, because less muscular, and need not have recourse to particular arts, feline chiefly, to make their way in the world. I have no special choice among the women of my books. Perhaps I gave more colour to 'Diana of the Crossways' and 'Clara Middleton' of the 'Egoist,' and this on account of their position.—Yours truly, George Meredith.

To Clement Shorter.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 2, 1905.

Dear Mr. Shorter,—I wish I could be with you at the Dinner. Greenwood is not only a great Journalist; he has a Statesman's head. The National interests have always been urgently at his heart, and moved him to personal sacrifices in the maintaining of his view touching the country's welfare. John Morley in the chair assures me that we shall have a public appreciation of his work and quality. Often in disagreement, I yet can say of him that there has been no truer patriot in our time.—Please let me know the price of the ticket. I will forward you cheque for a seat to be offered to any one of our fraternity willing to represent me.—With love to your wife, yours,

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Clement Shorter.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 24, 1905.

We modest little maids of a Surrey dale present our homage to the poet—who will not require a female tag to her tiller—and her sisters remaining will not expect to hear more of them, knowing them to be in a happy place. G. M.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 24, 1905.

Good Friend,—When the communication came I had vision of an enormous misty mountain that had been in some odd way benevolent to me, and I was mystified until I detected the presence of an active mouse, assuring of a living agency in the strange matter—anything but a ridiculous birth. For evidently it had fretted at the ear of the Premier and caused A. B. to cast eye on a small a. b., long a workman in letters. Was I not right? I wished for no distinction. A title would have sunk me. But I could not be churlish in this case.[1] Besides, I am to be ranked with and near you.—Yours at heart,

George Meredith.

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[1] The offer of the Order of Merit.

To Sir Francis Burnand.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *March* 30, 1905.

MY DEAR FRANK,—Blown down flat by the late March winds, I commissioned my daughter, Mrs. Sturgis, to reply to Mr. Mathews, that I wished to join in doing honour to Sir John Tenniel, but could not serve on the Committee or attend at the banquet—my son to take my place there. We pored over the Christian name of Mr. Mathews, and decided upon Charles, uninspired by recollections of the 'Peck o' malt,' which would have directed us to 'Willie' so much more readily than Mr. Mathews' signature. My daughter's letter may now be knocking at door after door in the Temple, until it reaches the Comedian's tombstone. She is off to the Riviera, carrying the address, and so be you good enough to deliver the burden of this to Mr. Mathews, adding my excuses. Very glad to hear from you and find myself remembered.—Frankly yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Edward Clodd.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *April* 5, 1905.

DEAR SIR REYNARD,—Lunch at 2 P.M. on Sunday next, and much rejoicing when I see the adventurer again, with whom I have laughed at his last clever stroke in the moment of departure, though myself the shuddering victim of it. The particular roll of Sir Reynard's roguish flanks as he trots along out of gunshot, another pullet in his jaws, being still a scene for these eyes. When will he forbear or I be a man to resist? You will represent me at the dinner on Saturday, and air your eloquence, as when you pitchforked me over the table of the Omar Khayaamites.—Heartily yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To his granddaughter, Joan Sturgis.

Box Hill, Dorking, *April* 15, 1905.

My blessed Joan,—Tell Dorothy to remind you to tell Mary to tell your Mummy to tell your Daddy to tell Jack that Sandie won't hear of his having a second Master, and says he comes to Box Hill only because he likes a change, but a Sunday's bunny hunt with his real master is one of his great joys, though he can make himself happy enough here during the week. He rather complains of being made too much of here, and says he prefers not to be treated as one of the family and talked to about events of the day when his mind is on his bunnies and his ball. He has no wish to be called a Learned Dog and held up in the newspapers.

And tell Dorothy to remind you to tell your Daddy that I have just finished Parkman's book on The Conspiracy of Pontiac—after keeping it for more than a year —and that I want the second volume, which narrates the end of the siege of Detroit. Mummy will bring it.—
Your loving George Meredith.

To his granddaughter, Joan Sturgis.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 9, 1905.

My dear Big little Joan,—We are in alarm here. For N—— has a swivel nose. It goes to right and left when she sniffs. I have told her the story of Martha Tatton to serve as a warning. Poor Martha had a swivel nose, and none could stop her from sniffing. One day it fixed on one side. Pull as she would, there it stuck. She rushed to a looking-glass, and fell tottering back. The pretty girl that she had been was ridiculous to behold. When she went to dinner she kept her hand over her nose as long as she could, and taking knife and fork burst into tears over her plate, so that Robert, the footman, supposed her to have been stung by a wasp, and he fetched cold cream to rub on it, and was horrified by the hard fixity of the nose. All her fellow-servants were laughing while Martha cried, so the master of the house had a doctor called in. He declared that the mishap was caused by a cramped muscle of the nose. The only thing to be done was to have a powerful magnet outside and a needle inside. Robert and two maids held Martha's right hand, Mrs. Whelks, the cook, a maid and the page boy her left. And presently the nose showed signs of tremours. 'It 's coming,' cried the doctor. But the tremours had seized the assistants—they could hold on no longer, and back to its false position went Martha's nose. This is what is likely to happen to N——.

JOAN'S GRANDPAPA.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *May* 29, 1905.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—It is possible that you have not seen Gaston Boissier's articles in the 'Revue des Deux Mondes' on the Conspiracy of Catiline. It should interest you as containing a fair exposition of the political character of Cicero—a corrective to Mommsen's ultra-German lash on the unsuccessful man; and this without sparing the great Orator's lack of a bronze intrepidity in a moment of danger. If the articles have escaped you turn to them, though I fancy your next illuminative portrait will be Cavour.—Haldane brings Lloyd George here on Saturday. I could wish for you too, but that I so much prefer having you to myself. Love to your wife.—Ever warmly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *June* 30, 1905.

Dearest Elder Brother in Merit,—There is no help for it, the Mountain must come here and submit to examination for the doings of that operative and secret mouse. Any day next week—I fancy Wednesday suits you.—A rain of telegrams.

With much eagerness to clasp your hand—and hers.

George Meredith.

To Edmund Gosse.

Box Hill, Dorking, *July* 2, 1905.

Dear Mr. Gosse,—Your letter was among the pleasantest ones, and said the most to me. For you are that rare thing in our country, a critic—and the something more which is needed for the office,—or else we have a Gifford or a Jeffrey.

Hardy was here some days back. I am always glad to see him, and have regrets at his going; for the double reason, that I like him, and am afflicted by his twilight view of life. He questioned me as to 'The Dynasts.' I spoke (needlessly) in favour of his continuing it now that it had a commencement. It was useless to say, as I think, that he would have made it more effective in prose, where he is more at home than in verse, though here and there he produces good stuff. Of much of Browning I could say the same.

Pray give me a chance of conversing with you some day after August.—Faithfully yours,

George Meredith.

To Leopold Salomons.

Box Hill, Dorking, *July* 5, 1905.

Dear Mr. Salomons,—It is true that with the concourse of two intelligent ladies not enjoying the suffrage we now count Nine! I remember the time before your coming when the fingers of a hand would have done it, bashfully raised. So we may rejoice. But not loudly: or like a cock-crow at 2 A.M. it will be a sound to rouse courses and subsequent ridicule over the country. Good enough that our stepping forward should be assured. It was pleasant to see you, for I am not a voluntary recluse, though my reception of Mrs. Salomons might almost warrant the charge.—Yours very truly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Clement Shorter.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *July* 7, 1905.

DEAR MR. SHORTER,—Your wife's prose book held me through the reading, but not so fully and contentedly as her books of the measured lines. She is one of the very few who can tell a tale in verse, and the ballad softens so much the gloomy and rending in a story of terror. I hope to have a talk with her when I return from Aldeburgh, where I have taken a cottage for six weeks; that will be at the end of August, and if you are then at liberty, pray persuade her to come with you. Also if she must write prose—as the present mood of the public seems to insist, probably from a surfeit of sentimental verse in certain journals, may she give the verve of her Irish nature, as in 'The Invisible Clothes.'—Warmly yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Meynell.

BOX HILL, *July* 7, 1905.

. . . You are with me daily, at the finish of most of my readings, when I compare our views. I should have written but for dread of the length of the letter, as I would surely have been when again in communication with you. At the end of August I return from Aldeburgh, where I have taken a cottage.

When I return, I may hope to see you, airing my selfishness in the thought of your journey. I, with my present hatred of the pen, have to write replies to congratulations.[1] Imagine it, for one feeling as I do about worldly honours. A title would have roused too much distaste.—With love to you and all the family.

George Meredith.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *July* 8, 1905.

Dearest Morley,—Tuesday then. For I must have that mouse,—I am consterné by a command of the Ld. Chamberlain that I am to present myself at B. Palace in levée dress on the 24th. I have to plead physical incapacity. In accepting the honour I had an idea that this order was exempt from the obligation pressing upon Knights and Barts., otherwise——

Breathe my love about you. George Meredith.

To Emile Legouis.[2]

Box Hill, Dorking,
England, *July* 30, 1905.

Dear Sir,—The Review containing your article on my novel 'The Egoist' has not come to me, and I regret it, for I hold strongly to the value of French criticism, whether in praise or blame. The latter is done (by the masters in the art) with so fine an irony that it instructs without wounding any but the vanitous person; and the eulogy confers green laurels instead of gilt. England has little criticism beyond the expression of likes or dislikes, the stout vindication of an old conservatism of taste. I have seen many reviews, not one criticism of my books in prose or verse. The name and date of the

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[1] On his reception of the Order of Merit.

[2] Of the University of Paris.

Review would enable me to get it through Hachette of London. I am staying for some weeks by the sea, at Aldeburgh, Suffolk.—Very truly yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Sturgis.

ALDEBURGH, SUFFOLK, *August* 2, 1905.

MY DEARIE,—Thoughts of Givons at Goodwood to-day lead me to speak of the contrast here. There is no scenery, dead flat land, a long line of shingly beach with bathing sheds marked for the sale of Holloway's Pills and Ointment—which Bessy Nicholls[1] declines daily for the in and outside of her, though they are offered freely at my expense. We have not yet seen a child bathing: probably because the beach shelves. All that can be given by Aldeburgh in exchange for amenities is a grand sea often peopled with shipping, and strengthening air. The Dearie will, if she deigns to visit the place, yawn a jaw-cracker at the end of the first day: manacles and hobbles and anæsthetics will be required to retain her at the end of the second. And my poor little ones will soon be aweary of the monotony.

Sir Reynard is good for a sail on the Salt Alde. There is nothing else. This has to be stated to you. For the rest, your coming would be a refreshment to me. The 'Wentworth Castle' hotel looks well externally.—Decide as you think fit.—With love to Joan and Dorothy, your own

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Emile Legouis.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *August* 13, 1905.

MY DEAR SIR,—Your extract and the body of the Review coming together touch me to a sense of remorse in my gratitude, when I think of the seeming impatience of my clamour to read your opinion. I had the idea that the Review had miscarried.

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[1] Miss Nicholls, the trained nurse who attended him devotedly till his death.

Well, an author who could fail to be pleased with so closely interpreted a notice of his work must have Gargantuan greed. I am bound to you by warm literary ties for presenting my book with such clearness to the French public.

I write while your marine receives homage and every accent of friendship from end to end of our country, and personality fades at the thought. It is this clasp of hands with France that I have looked for through the many years. May it endure! There is the knowledge of our debt to your literature entertained by us, which may help; and there is the growing knowledge of the not all Saxon nature of this country, for aid to it with you. More intercourse is the shuttle for the weaving of sweet friendliness.—Most truly yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Countess of Lytton.

There is no consolation for a weeping heart. Only the mind can help it, when the showers have passed. I might be of use in talking with you. As it is, I do not know how far you have advanced in the comprehension of Life. I can but pray that you may be strengthened to bear what blows befall you, and ask for fortitude. This is the lesson for the young, that whatever the heart clings to lays it open to grief, of necessity in such a world as ours; and whatever the soul embraces gives peace and is permanent. But that comes to us after many battles—or only to the strong mind which does not require them for enlightenment.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Sept.* 30, 1905.

Dearest of Friends,—There is no need for you to tell of wonderful changes in your wife. You are husband of the Seasons in person. But I like to hear of them, for they remind me of the times when I left her saddened by Winter to find her and be sent lark-like aloft in the face of Spring. Aldeburgh is a place without charm, like Crabbe's poetry; only grandeur of Sea. It lifted and steadied me to its own dead level and your coming will do more. I wish you had not to address multitudes, my fear concerns the wear of the throat. I read in the papers that it had to be done.—Violet Cecil[1] brought Lord Milner here. He has a fine head. I liked him, and avoided a touch on his policy. He laughs pleasantly. Give my love to your perennial Rose, with my anticipatory welcome.—Yours ever warmly,

George Meredith.

To Edward Vulliamy.

Oct. 12, 1905.

My dear Ned,[2]—You know that I have passed under the blow by which you are now struck; and will understand how close is my feeling for you. There is no consolation to be offered. It has to be endured. But remember how possibly it might have been you for whom the tears fell. This is our human condition upon which the mind should always be set. When the cloud of the bolt has drawn off, you will be able to find some comfort in the sympathy of friends. I feel deeply for Henriette.[1]

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[1] Miss Violet Maxse, married to Colonel Lord Edward Cecil.

[2] Meredith's eldest brother-in-law, whose wife, *née* Labouchere, to whom Meredith was sincerely attached, died in October 1905. It was at Montigny with Edward, and at Nonancourt with Theodore and Justin Vulliamy, both on the Avre, that Meredith spent many summers of his married life.

As to me, I remember happy days at Montigny, with tender gratitude to the dear hostess, and for the moment it is pain to look back. She would say, 'Keep good cheer as much as you can.' For that good religion she spread about her always.—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Nov.* 9, 1905.

DEAREST MORLEY,—The thought of you as coming here with a chill on you gives me a twitch of fever. Send me word of your present state. As for me, after lying on my back three weeks,[2] I find that I have been shipped by Tedium into the region of Doldrums, where all things droop, and Patience, like a trodden Toad, hops and yawns in the endeavour to act up to her name, under whip of Necessity. The bone seems to be mending. To-morrow a man comes to examine it by X rays. If favourable, I may hope to have the leg in plaster of Paris and say good-bye to bed by day. Had you seen the leg at first, you would have conceived a blackamoor emerging from a prize-fight. Now it is like Tommy after settling accounts at school. The accident occurred by my knocking my foot on the scullery threshold, so that I pitched forward while my foot was held and twisted.

Give my love to your wife. I have tried to be worthy of her resignation, and can imagine that I shall retain my laugh in Death's ear, for that is what our Maker prizes in men.—All yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Mrs. R. L. Devonshire, eldest daughter of Edward Vulliamy.

[2] Meredith, walking on the arm of his gardener, Cole, had slipped and broken his ankle.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Nov.* 19, 1905.

My dearest Morley,—The enclosed, with your directions obeyed. A bad night caused by an adventurous excursion into the next room makes me rely on dictation to-day. The letter from Windsor is extremely kind, and I am much indebted to Headquarters for the great consideration shown to me.—You have added another to the many good services which I shall some day take to counting, when my arithmetic improves.—A certain thickness of the head operates like the gates of Calcutta's dungeon to keep in my hosts of ideas whenever I am in communication with you.—Yours ever warmly,

George Meredith.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Dec.* 13, 1905.

My dearest Morley,—At last I am entitled to be hailed by you as Brother Merit. Sir Arthur Ellis came here by our King's command to invest me with the Insignia. It will repose in one of Riette's boxes, but not the less shall I feel it of myself owing to the kindness of H.M. and J.M.

From this time you will not have leisure for letters—you have India, and as you named it to me, I rejoice. See an article in the 'National Review' by the Stracheys. They are strongly with Lord Curzon.—The hope of seeing you now seems faint; that of seeing this paper is much the same. So the rest is darkness rendered visible by the star of my love for you. George Meredith.

To Mrs. J. G. Butcher.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Jan.* 1, 1906.

My dear Mrs. Butcher,—All good fortune to you for the year—except on the Highbury motor. Your father's princely dispensing of woodcocks would admonish sportsmen, who never shoot one without talking of it all the evening.

The Jap[1] conjures a scene marvellously—though I can hardly write, I am entreated day by day 'to send some words' to or for candidates, journals, and holders of meetings, not to speak of manuscript people panting for print.—Yours ever warmly, George Meredith.

To Sir Francis Burnand.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Jan.* 19, 1906.

My dear Frank,—Keep to your engagement. Remember that your friend has been open-armed for many years, and know that his muscles are getting stiffened, so that you may find a roadside sign-post to welcome you. We are now in for winter. Come when it is over, but woe 's me, they have taken my dining-room to make a bedroom of it, for an easier way of carrying me to and fro. You 'll have to excuse it, and as I want to see you again, I condemn you to the tedious journey unrefreshed.—Warmly yours, George Meredith.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Feb.* 1, 1906.

My dearest Morley,—With India on your brain pan, equal to the burden of Atlas on his back, you can but give a glance of the ear to the twitterings of a friend.

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[1] A Japanese print which Mrs. Butcher had sent him.

Tory scribes are already chuckling over your perplexities between Kitchener and the Viceroy, and you certainly have a task. But as the General need no longer keep such a watch on Asiatic Russia, one thinks that he need not be so insistent.

I was afflicted by the death of Jebb. I took his vols. of Sophocles when they came out, and prize the scholar's work.—If you have not read the 'Renaissance' of the Comte de Gobineau, you will find pleasant relaxation in it.—The ideas in the heads of the characters of the time are given with masterly sureness, in refreshing French.—I see the length of India before our next hobanob.—The list of Labour Members rejoices me in one way, rather alarms in another. Will they be open to large questions?

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Feb.* 11, 1906.

Dear Lord of the Indies, to whom Brahmin, Buddhist, wild Pathan, bearded Sikh, and gentle Hindoo bow, thou meantime with head aflame above the hosts, like the peak of Mount Everest while the world is in night; and O thou that holdest judiciously the delicate balance between Civil and Military—come to this cottage and its picnic dinner when you can throw off the cares of office for a couple of hours, always sure of rejoicing me. If ever you want good reading, get the Comte de Gobineau's book on the Renaissance. I have sent for his 'Histoire des Perses.' The Revue des deux Mondes has two articles on Stendhal worth reading. This low temperature racks me, murdering sleep. The death of Lady Grey[1] distressed me.—Ever lovingly yours in prostration,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Wife of Sir Edward Grey, Bart., K.G.

To Mrs. J. G. Butcher.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Feb.* 27, 1906.

My dear Alice Butcher,—Certainly I will sign the petition on behalf of John Davidson,[1] a worthy writer, and I regret deeply that he should need to apply for it.

I return the book of the Comte de Gobineau. I have not for long read anything so good. The Renaissance in its chief ruler and the ideas and character of the time is made to live. So much has the author impressed me that I sent for his 'Histoire des Perses' and exposé of his political notions.

Your defeat at York[2] was a shock even to my Radical bosom.

Would I let in a friend if I could? I do not answer.—Yours warmly,

George Meredith.

To Dr. H. Anders.

Box Hill, Dorking, *April* 5, 1906.

My dear Sir,—The fractured leg has been attended with complications incident to one in his 78th year, and I pray you to let this be my excuse for the delay in replying to your very pleasant letter with the gift of the Shakespeare Book. I might have called my married daughter to serve as amanuensis, but there is a coldness in dictated letters, and I held myself in reserve until I could take pen in hand, trusting to your indulgence. What superior power of patient investigation and conjectural acuteness is it that enables your countrymen to throw new light upon the work they undertake, although many labourers have gone before them. This you have done in the case of Shakespeare, and we are indebted to you for it. I remember reading in my youth Otto Jahn's Memoir of the great Philologer Hermann and his indefatigable devotion to work, with a sigh of regret that he who had his rivals at home, had so few if any among us. As for me, you ask of my readings of the formative kind. They were first the Arabian Nights, then Gibbon, Niebuhr, Walter Scott ; then Molière, then the noble Goethe, the most enduring. All the poets, English, Weimar and Suabia and Austrian.—I have the honour to be, your much obliged, GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Author of *Fleet Street Eclogues, Ballads and Songs*, etc.

[2] J. G. Butcher had sat for York City in the previous Parliament.

Forgive my ignorance of your titles in addressing you.

To the Secretary of the Rationalist Press Association.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *April* 24, 1906.

DEAR SIR,—The privilege proposed to me of being among you at your annual gathering this year would have been hailed in acceptation the more readily for the opportunity I should have had to offer my tribute to the memory of George Jacob Holyoake, one of the truly great Englishmen of our time. From his earliest days as a worker he spoke for the poor, who could not speak for themselves, and for the instructed, too timid to think for themselves. Much is owing to him that England is no longer regarded on the Continent as the backward country in relation to Freethought, and that the term ' Freethinker ' ceases to imply a holy reproach, a warning to infants and the craven. Even Churchmen have been known to allude to him with consideration. By sober persistency, the result of a profound conviction as to the truth of his cause, he succeeded at last in conquering hostile opinion ; and that being English, it will be owned that he did nothing less than disintegrate a granite rock. Such men as he are the backbone of our land. They are not eulogised in monuments; they have a stouter memorial in the hearts of all who venerate a simple devotion to the oppressed, the labours of a clear intelligence, contempt of material rewards, and unflinching courage. Yours truly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To G. M. Trevelyan.

May 20, 1906.

DEAR MR. TREVELYAN,—I am glad of the trouncing occasionally bestowed on me in your book,[1] for it serves to counterbalance a degree of praise hardly digestible by reviewers. I fear most that which you will be indisposed to consider—the chances of a success as a reward for your pains. As to the exposition of my meaning, it is made clearly and has my approval. I could contest one or two objections. Where is the author who could not? The reviewers, if the book should be noticed, are likely to maintain a hereditary opposition to my mind and work, or else they will disappoint my ready enjoyment of them. Let us hope that the Princess Mary[2] will have a brother presented to her whom she will be maternal with in the earlier days, that he may become an Arnold-Trevelyan. The cause of my not seeing her is too good for me to regret it. But come when the mood is on you.—Most truly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Clement Shorter.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *May* 23, 1906.

DEAR MR. SHORTER,—Your wife's little book made me a juvenile, finding the eternal poet in that wise creature. I saw a review that misunderstood it. This has happened to me through life, so she has my sympathy. But reviewing is too hasty and wilful for a second thought of it.—Yours faithfully, GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] *The Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith.*

[2] Mary, daughter of G. M. and Mrs. Trevelyan.

To Sidney Lysaght.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *June* 6, 1906.

DEAR MR. LYSAGHT,—Your description of the ancestral country now trodden by you makes me burst with envy. I am heartily glad that you have taken to Ireland for your scene and characters. They have yet to be presented. But truth and only occasional jigs, mind—not over-mournful nor too rollicking. Have not an eye on English taste.[1]—Yours faithfully, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To G. M. Trevelyan.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *June* 15, 1906.

DEAR MR. TREVELYAN,—Your wife's article on The Frau Aia was very pleasant reading to me, and gave me fuller knowledge of her. Also with added wonder of that Arnold blood, which transmits onward brains and taste. But the more we know of Goethe's mother the more terrible is the thought of that Nietzschean Upperman, her son. In the case of Eckermann and his bride it is the same story.

My leg has mended, the doctors tell me; but by mismanagement of the splints, I have a sore heel—torment at night and a teazing by day. So I cannot get enough sleep. Next week any day I may be in better trim, if you should be inclined to come. I deplore the fact that a journey by rail to and fro is needed for a small object.—Yours faithfully, GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] The letter refers to Mr. Lysaght's novel, *Her Majesty's Rebels*.

To G. M. Trevelyan.

Box Hill, Dorking, *July* 6, 1906.

Dear Mr. Trevelyan,—Relief in delight is here the note. And I was a prophet. I see your Princess Mary's first eyes at the babe.—A wonder, a plaything, a ball to hug and toss! The mother has done handsomely. Greet her from me. I could prophesy again, but shall not be among you to see the verification, and reserve further statement of my good hopes for the family, the country, and the world.—You are involved in my friendliest wishes. George Meredith.

To H. W. Nevinson.

Box Hill, Dorking, *July* 9, 1906.

The members of the Duma, when we consider that they are living in a whirlwind, with two great opposing forces pulling at them from either side, have shown a memorable self-control, and, in regard to foreign relations, grave good sense. They will see that the expedition of the British Fleet to Kronstadt is a visit of amity to Russia simply. It is the heart of England that speaks to the Russian people now; all parties waiting in the hope that the Duma may hold firm for liberty, and, in despite of vexatious obstruction, steer clear of excess; thus giving proof to the Tsar that he may trust the destinies of his empire to their counsels.

To Lady Ulrica Duncombe.

Box Hill, Dorking, *July* 16, 1906.

My dear Lady Ulrica,—You will have bled over the news of the day. But when the horror and the grief subside, the mind must be set to rise and contemplate facts and their causes. We have not had clean hands in China.—Never attempt to dissociate your ideas from the real of life. It weakens the soul; and besides it cannot be done—and again it is a cowardly temporary escape into delusion, clouding the mind; through which is our only chance of seeing God, the God so much obscured by the Churchmen supplicating the Divinity's interposition. Look for the causes of evil; they are always to be found, and easily to the resolved seeker, both in our personal and the public history.—Be sure that the Spiritual God is accessible at all moments to the Soul desiring him, and would live in us, if we would keep the breast clean. Only we cannot ask him to strike between us and his Laws. The petition, with the failure of it in absence of a reply, is a main source of general disbelief. You are not one who plays at life, so you will submit to the homily. . . .

To Mrs. Sturgis.

ALDEBURGH, SUFFOLK, *July* 19, 1906.

MY DEARIE,—Bessy begs for ½ ℔ of your butter on Saturday, and 1 ℔ on Tuesday next. What you have sent gave me the taste of a better world. This of Aldeburgh bawled Margarine as it entered my mouth. The vegetables grow apparently in the shops that sell them; the fruits on the shingle. Rank and Fashion have not yet arrived; hotel windows gape, and every second house raises the lamentable cry of Apartments. Strange fowls or clever semblances send me eggs for breakfast. They commit suicide on their way, and appear before me inside out, in the manner of ancients. They are interesting, for having a IXth Century flavour.—The absence of Sandie is felt severely. But it will be better not to bring him. Bessy says, there is no plot of ground upon which to give him his airing in the morning, and she cannot afford time to look after him and keep him from flitting to sea. So we hope that on our return he will be at Box Hill to welcome us.—Great kindness at the house[1] here. Daily sight of the sea very pleasant. Tell Dorothy I have seen a long line of sand. Excursion to wharf on the Alde quite rapturous. Kiss my girls. GEORGE M.

To Mrs. Sturgis.

ALDEBURGH, *August* 1, 1906.

MY DEARIE,—An Omnibus arrives on the Parade, with luggage piled high. Excitement. An Omnibus departs, with luggage piled high. Depression. The good people will not see their heavy charges combined with the poor attractions are forbidding. They plead that they have a season of only two months. But such a place should never have counted on a Season at all. Their bathing machines, plastered with advertisements of Holloway's Pills, cry avaunt to the visitor. Besides, though 'simple, safe, sure,' younger pills are in the field, and they do not importunately solicit the bather before entering salt water.—Seeing the deadness of Aldeburgh, I cannot ask you to come: and if you did, it would be only to see Dada perpetually coughing and sending for relays of handkerchiefs. Bessy, because of my moist skin, must imagine my lungs affected, and hauls in a Doctor, by whom I am sounded on chest and back. He owns I am right in telling him that my lungs are never affected, nor my bronchial tubes. Owing to my condition, I am not allowed to stay more than 5 minutes watching the old ferryman—my one intellectual amusement here. Write

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[1] Edward Clodd's house, facing the sea, where Meredith had stayed on his first visit to Aldeburgh, and where, for the pleasure of Mr. Clodd's company and the benefit of the east coast air, he had returned and taken furnished rooms.

soon, and this time with word of Sandie. His relative, my particular refreshment, has gone. Love to my little ones.
GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Sept.* 1, 1906.

DEAREST MORLEY,—This rule of Phœbus will break before Monday, but there may be rains, and if, as I trust, your wife accompanies you, my fly must meet you: so let me know the hour of your train. Your capacity to put aside a mighty burden that you may visit a modest friend is memorable.—Have you not been disappointed by Haldane's evasion of the German field manœuvres? I had anticipatory and fearfully sweet visions of him in an Attila charge of horse with the staff of the fiery William.—Ever warmly,
GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Sturgis.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Sept.* 7, 1906.

MY DEARIE,—It is deplored that you have accepted the invitation to Byfleet. It cuts you off from your chance of restoration. Littlehampton is the one place of Perfect Rest. The Sahara cannot match it, nor a ship in the doldrums. Where there is nothing to see, nothing to hear, no object for thought, you become penetrated by the spirit of the place—or by the absence of one, and are fit to be remade on your return to life. Happily you have your chance in the two weeks after the 15th. It will be open to you then to preach of the virtues of Littlehampton in London, thus leading many worn women who have sight of your resurrection, to the cure.—At Aldeburgh I found no such specific, owing to the attractions of the old Ferryman. Here there is nought to tell of, except that Bessy and Frances went blackberrying and are now sown thick with harvest-bugs. They scratch and jig. I am no worse than usual.—Your loving GEORGE M.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Sept.* 18, 1906.

DEAREST MORLEY,—With this the book of Artom, from which you may learn something, but I get little more than an image of a faithful and able servant of the great man. Of the expedition of the Mille I find nothing new. The concluding summary is a deserved eulogy, pleasant to read.

Hyndman's attack on the English in India may do mischief. He can never be moderate. Énergumène by nature, he will end with his first idea, and it is a wonder that he has not appeared waving a torch in the streets. With all this, a good fellow. On the other hand, the pamphlet on Egypt by Wilfrid Blunt, of which he sends me a copy (and it likewise may do mischief), is a subject for meditation. He speaks with knowledge. This might be a matter for discussion with Sir Edward Grey. Possibly the prolonged dominance in Egypt may have hardened Lord Cromer.

Your visit was delightful and sets me longing. Love to your wife. I am all yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John H. Hutchinson.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Oct.* 15, 1906.

DEAR SIR,—Your generous notice of my books breathes of Ireland, and greets me as a gust of my well-beloved S. West wind over salt water. This, too, when I have long ago ceased to care for good or bad notice of them.

You mention 'One of our Conquerors' with revulsion. It is a trying piece of work. I had to look at it recently, and remembered my annoyance in correcting proofs. But, strange to say, it held me. A doctor of the Insane wrote to my Publishers from Australia that the opening chapter showed all the intimations of incipient lesion of brain, and he wondered whether I had studied the disease. Had I done so I should not have written of it. The novel has value, for containing the characters of Nesta Radnor, little Skepsey, and Dartrey Fenellan, and an Irish Gentleman, of a Type different from Colonel de Craye, of the 'Egoist.' Also, I found in it much that is now made manifest of the malady afflicting England.

Home Rule for Ireland is coming:—only it is bit by bit, and the Irish, who would have given a whole-hearted response to Gladstone's measure, are irritated by delay, unappeased by the sops, excited to meditate on absolute disruption,—disastrous for both countries. I watch the process painfully. Heaven help us! that is to say, let us take counsel of the God within, if we have not ejected him.—Yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Walter Hogg.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Oct.* 21, 1906.

DEAR SIR,—Your little book of the Sonnets[1] gives pleasure in the reading, and this to one who knows the mechanism of the verse and how perfectly the single thought in it has to be evolved. Several of them have struck me: I mention sonnet xxx as exceptionally successful, to my thinking. I trust that reviewers may notice the book in a way to bring it to the attention of the public. But you who have published previously will know what is to be expected from the public in

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[1] *Meditata*, by Walter Hogg.

relation to poetry—and especially the Sonnet form of it.—
Yours truly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To F. S. Oliver.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Oct.* 24, 1906.

DEAR MR. OLIVER,—Assuming it to be true (which I do remorsefully) that I spoke so rudely to you of the splendid faculty of silence shown by you when we met at Goring, your book on Alexander Hamilton deals me a doughty return blow, all the heavier for the admiration it excites in me. You call it a Study. It has the quality of History. You bring out the character of the man and of the men about him. I have learnt much from the book. I thank you for it warmly, and shall look with hope for fresh work from your hand. In these days it is needed.—
Yours faithfully, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Editor of the 'Times.'

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Nov.* 1, 1906.

SIR,—Women, and for this they incur our severe disapprobation, are excitable. They desire to have the suffrage; to that end they storm the House of Commons and clamour for the right to assist in voting for members of the august Assembly. It was unwise on their part; a breach in good manners, an error of judgment, proof that they have not yet learnt how to deal with men. For until men have been well shaken at home, and taught that woman is a force to be reckoned with, they will not only resolutely bar the fortress they hold against feminine assailants, they will punish offenders sharply. But let it be remembered that men also are excitable. London town bore witness to the fact one day not so very ancient, when they skirmished along the streets at night, even as an incessant procession of motor omnibuses, whelmed the police, and indulged in every form of loutish extravagance, merely to celebrate a happy event.[1] Now in the case of the women the intemperateness of which they were guilty held an idea, going some way to excuse them. In the case of the men it was sheer animal exuberance, a headlong smashing of things handy for the blow, all in jollity. But, if we are asked which of the sexes is the more open, in these two instances, to the temporary form of insanity known as hysteria, can we say it was the woman? Or can we say that women of the Christian day are given to be disorderly in a body? Rather are they in their present development given to be subservient to laws written or unwritten. Men have called them slavish.

Consider, too, that the cause for which these imprisoned women are suffering is on its way to be realized. Men have only to improve their knowledge of women, and it will be granted speedily. Sentimental prattle of the mother, the wife, the sister is not needed when we see, as the choicer spirits of men do now see, that women have brains, and can be helpful to the hitherto entirely dominant muscular creature who has allowed them some degree of influence in return for servile flatteries and the graceful undulations of the snake—admired yet dreaded. Women must have brains to have emerged from so long a bondage. Will they be nervous in excess during a period of crisis, acting as one body and forming a torrent where but a flow of the stream was wanted? Danger was there, we might say, if it were anything like a new danger. We have experienced it with voting man; history is full of examples. But by providently throwing open the avenues to occupations demanding practical mental activity, we should offer women the way to govern emotions and learn how to state a case. In the present instance, it is the very excellence of their case that inflames them. How can they doubt it when they know they are supported in their claim by so thoughtful a man as the chief of the Conservative party, and have the countenance of the chief of the Liberal party, a voice on their behalf from the Secretary of State for India, one who weighs what he utters, however warm his feelings? The mistake of the women has been to suppose that John Bull will move sensibly for a solitary kick. It makes him the more stubborn, and such a form of remonstrance with him alienates the decorous among the sisterhood, otherwise not adverse to an emancipation of their sex. It cannot be repeated, if the agitating women are to have the backing of their sober sisters. Yet it is only by repetition of this manner of enlivening him that John Bull (a still unburied old gentleman, though not much alive) can be persuaded to move at all. Therefore we see clearly that the course taken by the suffragists was wrong in tactics. It may be argued likewise that the punishment inflicted on them has magnified the incident foolishly; and the act proposed for escape from the punishment instigated martyrdom.

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[1] The relief of Mafeking.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Dr. H. Anders.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Nov.* 9, 1906.

DEAR SIR,—My reply to you will not give you complete satisfaction, I may fear. For I have not made any estimate of the value of my books in prose. I see many faults in all of them, and though I have not striven for perfection, as that would have cramped my hand in writing, something nearer to it would have pleased me. 'The Egoist' comes nearer than the other books to the proper degree of roundness and finish. In 'Diana of the Crossways' my critics own that a breathing woman is produced, and I felt that she was in me as I wrote. 'Rhoda Fleming' is liked by some, not much by me. 'Richard Feverel' was earnestly conceived, and is in some points worthy of thought. 'Beauchamp's Career' does not probe so deeply, but is better work on the surface.—I have treated my books of prose as the mother bird her fledgelings.—(I like) well your illuminating notes on Shakespeare, and feel my debt for your gift.—Know me most faithfully yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Nov.* 17, 1906.

MY DEAREST MORLEY,—The Longinus is returned herewith. It was good to go through the book again, and I am in concurrence with the criticism; not so much with the examples of the sublime, e.g. 'God said Let there be Light, and there was Light.' This is effectively literary. But how much more marvellous had there not been Light. Harlequin's wand says to the blank screen, Let there be a street of shops; and lo, the cobbler, the baker, the butcher, and clown digging a leg of mutton into his baggy breech with a horrible grimace. That, beside the fun, is miraculous to children. But of course we hold in consideration the difference of times. Believers in an intervening Deity will still hear the words from the pulpit as sublime, little imagining how they lower him.—I have just finished Maitland's Biography of Leslie St.—on the whole a fair portrait, but too bulky a volume, too many letters.

To W. M. Meredith.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Nov.* 23, 1906.

DEAR WILL,— . . . I knew Whistler and never had a dissension with him, though merry bouts between us were frequent. When I went to live in the country we rarely met. He came down to me once. He was a lively companion, never going out of his way to take offence, but with the springs in him prompt for the challenge. His tales of his student life in Paris, and of one Ernest, with whom he set forth on a holiday journey on next to nothing in their purse, were impayable.

The death of Thoby Stephen has much clouded me.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Edward Clodd.

Nov. 27, 1906.

The two vols. of York Powell's Letters and Remains have been sent to me, so that I shall be indebted to you for only the kindness of the offer. Like all the Memoirs of our time, it is overlaid with repetitions too thick, the character confirmed over and over, in spite of the ability of the biographer. This impression remains from the number of knocks on the head that the reader has received. However, it was a worthy character. I had a fond corner for him, as well as an admiration for his work, without acquiescing in his literary opinions. I am distressed by the death of Thoby Stephen, Leslie's eldest son, a bright young fellow—poisoned by something in Greece, hence enteric, then peritonitis.

To his granddaughter, Dorothy Sturgis.

BOX HILL, DORKING, 1906.

MY DEAR DUMPLIN DOROTHY,—Sandie sends you a message. It is to tell his Master that he misses the Sunday bunny runs, and he invites him to come and lunch any Sunday he may choose. Then away at a gallop for a couple of hours. He says he will postpone lunch to 2 o'clock, if his master will send him word that he is coming. A train will bring him to Leatherhead in time for a walk through Norbury meadows and reach his old dog close on 2.—And tell Jack to call on Alderman J——, and speak strongly of the behaviour of those two naughty brothers of Julia to that poor little girl. They have been seen in Hyde Park rolling her down slopes in a race with their mother's fat Spaniel and taking wagers from the people about. Worse, they have hired a booth and made a show of her, because she is like a magnified pumpkin. And they say, What else is she good for? It is true she rolls like a ball, and no head, and only toes are seen as she rolls. But it must be bad for her. Tell Jack to find the number of the house in the Directory. Julia tries to share her brothers' fun. She cannot really enjoy it, though she says she is not fit for anything but to show how fat she is. Her nursemaid is a gaby and quite helpless with those boys. —Your loving GRANDDADA.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 24, 1906.

DEAREST MORLEY,—My telegram said a little bit of what I feel on the day of your birth. It gave a good man to the world and to me a friend. Influenza has again struck down Arthur Balfour, and it reminds me that you are subject to the attacks of this fiend. Happily you will not be sitting in the House, one of her favourite haunts:—not dining at banquets, I trust; nor out at all, for the breathing of night air after that of heated rooms. Let eucalyptus be always about you.—I have been reading much: Leslie Stephen, York Powell: two articles in the 'R. des deux Mondes' on Machiavelli and the Borgia (very good), and good also Michel Bréal, 'Pour mieux comprendre Homère.' You can have it if you like. He is learned and sensible. He insists, and proves by fair evidence, that the Iliad is of nearer date to us than has been assumed: the Odyssey, of course, later still.

Half a line of your condition will relieve me. Offer my love to your wife. I suppose you to be at home, having India on your head. May all the powers of Earth and Air strengthen you, GEORGE MEREDITH.

Maitland's death saddens me. He was one of Leslie's tramps at my table.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 27, 1906.

DEAREST MORLEY,—Here is the book of M. Bréal. You will remember him as the author of the Sémantique. He wrote also an interesting book on the topography of the Odyssey, showing how the poet followed the chart of [the Phoenicians] and identifying many places touched by Odysseus.[1] He is an acute and enterprising scholar. I will send you soon a book on Hérault de Séchelles, worth a glance, though the man is not of much worth. Have you read Ferrero's 'Antoine et Cléopâtre'? It is illuminating. There was a form of love between them, but more of policy on both sides. This he makes clear. Plutarch's account is a rosy mist.

As I read the weather we are in for a very wintry January and part of February. In which case, there will be prospect of a genial Spring. So, though it is to keep you from me, I must acquiesce. My love to your wife.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Meredith has here confused Bréal with Victor Bérard, author of *Les Phéniciens et L'Odyssée.*

To Sidney Colvin.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Jan.* 2, 1907.

Dear Sidney Colvin,—You will always be welcome, but the thought of a journey to and fro in this weather for so small an object distresses me. Say the middle of February, any Sunday in the afternoon, you will find me at home and glad to see you. About the time I mention a break in the skies will have come, probably South-west, and the thrushes to greet you. With my respects to your wife.—Yours ever,

George Meredith.

Do you know the 'Nuova Antologia' (Rome)?—the Editor sends me numbers containing a translation of my *Diana of the Crossways*, more faithfully done [than] is usual with translations. I am unaware whether the Review is of any standing.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Jan.* 20, 1907.

My dearest Morley,—Attributable to your talk with President Roosevelt, or to Bryan, I have a letter from the great man, cordial, touching my 80 years in February, and mentioning the poems he likes. I must reply, and the superscription of the letter addressing him bothers me. You may be able to help. I shrink from an appearance of ignorance as to the formalities. Cela donne trop l'air d'être hors du monde—one of the weaknesses of the civilized.—All the welcomes await you here, cellar, table, open arms, as ever. But the uncertain weather has held me from entreaties. And now comes Parliament. Decide as early as you can, avoiding nights of frost.

George Meredith.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Jan.* 27, 1907.

Dearest Morley,—An article in 'The Atlantic Monthly' on 'The Nude in Autobiography' deals with Rousseau and your book on him. Some rather good things are said, especially that of the effect on the writer of his own nudities of revelation. It is worth a glance, when you can spare time for it.—Let me hope that you are keeping your strength. George Meredith.

To Clement Shorter.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Feb.* 13, 1907.

Dear Mr. Shorter,—Please, tell the gifted good wife how much I value her junction with you in the pleasant message I received on the 12th, an anniversary that, but for the like, would preach to me of non-producers being in the proper place under the soil, instead of burdening it. And this I say with a cheerful heart, having tasted of life and knowing nature.—Yours faithfully,

George Meredith.

To his granddaughter, Margot Meredith.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 18, 1907.

My dear Margot,—Yes, you shall give me the bunny. But do not send it. You are to keep it for me; and the enclosed 5 shillings will enable you to feed it on my behalf. Thank you immensely.

Joan and Dorothy came to me last week, Dorothy looking better than of late, but still a little pale. Sandie despatches a friendly bark to Thompson—if you spell the name with a p. No news of George means good news, I hope.

And now with love to Mama and Papa, not forgetting Armandine, I am yours in as nearly a Grandfatherly way as I can manage, George Meredith.

To Miss Wheatcroft.

Box Hill, Dorking, *April* 13, 1907.

Women who form associations to discuss political matters, whether for one party or the other, are taking the right road to the polling booth. Let them never abandon good manners, not even in the heat of dissension, or they will lose their best weapon. The vote for those among them who may wish to exercise it is coming; but it can be retarded, and any show of intemperateness will persuade men that there is danger in granting it. At present our civilization is ill-balanced, owing to a state of things affecting women, which they may well call subjection. It depends chiefly upon women that this shall be altered. By not looking for immediate success they will learn to have patience, a primary virtue in all contests. For History tells us that the good cause triumphs in the end, though the individuals may not live to see it. But we strive for the cause, not for ourselves.

To Mrs. Wilson.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 12, 1907.

My dear Friend,—The Comforter coming from your hands is doubly comforting—in thought while summer lasts, in fact when winds are fierce. It was good of you to think of me at such a time, instead of writing an article to warn ladies of the dangers of shopping. Never before had I thought upon it. But you were famed for exceptional adventures. I can hear and see you in your humorous account of the incident. I thank the Lord it was no worse. Pray let me know that your progress is good. And say a word of Julia and Dora—old ladies both of them now and wearing well, I hope.—Yours ever warmly,

George Meredith.

To Mrs. J. G. Butcher.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 12, 1907.

My dear Alice Butcher,—Dorothy's report of you this morning brings me to your bedside. I need not speak of my grief—you will know. And you know how vexatious it is to hear the preaching of patience. That virtue is withdrawn from us at the moment. I have gone through the trial—on my back for a month, with one leg in a cathedral gallows.

Then permission to lie on the right side or the left—luxury immense, until the thought of people up and moving caused the bed to seem an implacable rack.

However I wore a smile through it, and chaffed Doctor, nurse and myself. The thing to do in such a case is to rise humorously above one's body, which is the veritable rebel, not the mind.

That also is the task, whether we are up and about or lying in bed. So you see you are still one with us under the same trial.

But this will seem only another way of preaching patience.—Ever warmly, George Meredith.

To J. C. Smith.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 14, 1907.

Dear Sir,—You do rightly in asking, and it helps to relieve me of one of my many sins of 'obscurity.' If you observe the Planet Venus at the hour when the dawn does no more than give an intimation, she is full of silver, and darkness surrounds her. So she seems to me to fly on dark wings. The image will come more home to you by looking at her; explanations barely present it. 'Black star' is common in classic poets. It is true I push the epithet farther.[1] But so I saw it.—Yours truly,

George Meredith.

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[1] In answer to an inquiry as to the meaning of the lines in 'Hymn to Colour':—'By this, the dark-winged planet . . .'

To H. W. Nevinson.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 27, 1907.

Dear Mr. Nevinson,—Think as you will of me, I cannot sign the Memorial. I am with the Revolutionaries, but not to the extent of declaring war on the Russian Government. Moreover, I think that Stolypin, with the hardest of tasks, is doing his best. And having some faith in the wisdom of Sir Edward Grey, I do not like to see him hampered. I read your account of the Circassians and Tartars with a lively interest.—Truly yours,

George Meredith.

To the Secretary, The Humanitarian League.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 31, 1907.

Dear Mr. Salt,—On a point or two of your advocacy I am not in accord with you, but fully upon most. Pray, accept the enclosed small cheque £1 for the use of your League. The rabbit-traps[1] are among the villainous offences against humanity.

I trust that you and Mrs. Salt continue well.—Yours faithfully,

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Isobell E. E. Stigand.

Box Hill, Dorking, *June* 11, 1907.

Dear Madam,—You will see by the enclosed that your letter was omitted in mine to the Secretary—how, I do not know, for I am unable to find it. But the presentation of the sad case of the widow, coming from you, as a member of the Society, direct to the Secretary, may have a better effect. Write it fully, but plainly. Henry Kingsley has a claim on our literature. A pension, I fear, is precluded by the rules. A donation there may be well.

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[1] The spring-traps, known as gin-traps, in which the animal is caught by limb or body and held in misery until it is secured and killed or dies in agony.

Write immediately. You can, if you please, say what I think of H[enry] Kingsley.—Yours truly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. J. G. Butcher.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *July* 16, 1907.

MY DEAR ALICE BUTCHER,—You have my constant sympathy, in thoughts at many moments during the day. For though my trial was milder, I found it hard to be always on my back, denied any blessed turning to right or left—the procession of the worn-out same thoughts passing through me.

Then the crippled leg was encased, and I could make a show of turning; but chiefly to astound the virtuous leg at the strange transmogrification of its familiar fellow. That for the second month of durance.

Your date of November afflicts me with a heavy weight. Time flies; but it flies faster *out* of bed. The grey old Senior once in it is a sleepy beast unknowing of variety. November must give you indemnification.

As to the car you so kindly propose, Thursday would suit me, in the afternoon, between 2½ and 3. At Fleet on a visit to Will and his wife I hired one for a week, and we had many excursions with a trusty chauffeur.

Heaven be with you, and that good thing of the terrible word for one imprisoned, Patience.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Plymouth.

July 1907.

The place chosen for the memorial of Henley, in the heart of the great city he loved well and sang of nobly, strikes the mind as the fulfilment of this English poet's highest material aspiration, and cannot but be in full accord with the wishes of his admirers. He had the poet's passion for nature, and by reason of it the poet's fervent devotion to humanity. Light of the skies playing upon smoky vapour, city scenery, city crowds, stirred in him these raptures which are the founts of spirited verse. Rightly could he speak of his unconquerable soul. It was a soul that had to do perpetual battle with an undermined and struggling body, and this joyfully, and as far as could be possible, buoyantly; for all his nature sprang up to hail the divinity of life. From a bed of sickness that might seem a hopeless imprisonment he gave out impressions of a daily hospital round and his own moods without a shadow of despair to darken the poetic vision; but when he was restored to companionship with his fellows one involuntary touch occurs in his verse to tell of the suffering he had passed through. He rejoiced in the smell of the streets. There we have the lover of life rising from the depths. Such was the man. As critic he had the rare combination of enthusiasm and wakeful judgment. Pretentiousness felt his whip smartly. The accepted imbecile had to bear the weight of his epigram. But merit under a cloud or just emerging he sparkled on or lifted to the public view. He was one of the main supports of good literature in our time. His inspiriting heartiness and inciting counsels gathered about him a troop of young writers who are proud in acknowledging their debt to him for the first of the steps they made on the road to distinction. Deploring we have lost him, we may marvel that we had him with us so long. What remains is the example of a valiant man, the memory of him in poetry that will endure.

To Professor James Sully.

Box Hill, Dorking, *August* 22, 1907.

My dear Sully,—The case with me was that I had not slept for a couple of nights.

Your coming was rather a relief. I am amused by the French Reviews of your 'Philosophy and Psychology of the Laugh.' You will have read Faguet. Then there is a Marcel Tempot. He says—'Sous l'apparence d'une extrême gravité, M. James Sully nous raconte des choses éblouissantes. . . . Cela c'est du Rabelais, c'est gargantuesque. Dans le même ton il parle du derrière du Rire. L'a-t-il vu, ce derrière ? Pour moi, il a toujours été invisible comme l'autre côté de la lune. Il est vrai que si le Rire a un front, que nous voyons, il doit avoir un derrière. Est-ce que c'est plus riant qu'en face ? Du tout. M. Sully nous assure que c'est grave comme l'oiseau de Minerve; le "backside of the Laugh," n'est pas pour faire éclater. Il a l'air d'un prêtre immobilisé. On voit bien que M. Sully est humoriste de la façon de nos pince-sans-rire. En vérité on ne peut pas être métaphysicien plus subtile, ni psychologue plus profond que M. Sully. Nous le croyons aussi le meilleur des comédiens. Et c'est un Anglais.'—Ever, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Professor James Sully.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Sept.* 6, 1907.

MY DEAR SULLY,—You would not accuse me, as you do so ungratefully, after the trouble I took in transcribing a portion of the article of Marcel Tempot, if you saw the many that have followed him, moved no doubt by Emile Faguet.

One by Ptolemée de Saint-Adrin amused me. It begins—'Dans ce Rire de Mr. James Sully il n'y a rien de riant. C'est une chose bien grave. C'est en effet le cadavre du Rire, et comme dans la célèbre leçon d'Anatomie de Rembrandt, nous voyons M. Sully scalpel en main, montrant et expliquant aux farceurs, avec une gravité presque prodigieuse, toutes les articulations du Rire.' The article is in this vein, rather too much prolonged to sustain the humour, such as it is.

But it is on the whole complimentary, as is that of Armand Vantidini in Le Valant, who concludes—'Enfin, grâce à M. James Sully, nous savons ce que nous faisons quand nous rions. Remercions-lui que nous rions comme des êtres intelligents.'

As to motors, wait for the day (or night) of Aeroplanes; when there will be descents on houses, and people in their beds flattened to pancakes for the morning's view of them.—Do not abuse me in future for watching over your literary fame.[1] G. M.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Sept.* 7, 1907.

My dearest Morley,—There could be no anticipation of your coming to see me after the close of your heavy work, and with the 'Unrest' on your mind to be thrown off partly or wholly for a time by mountain air and scene. Nor did I expect to hear. I rejoice to think of you as on the heights and share your nostril sniffs of that pure wine of life given us in the upper air—Nature's aristocratic region. For she insists on aristocracy, as we shall gladly own when we get it of the right kind. Of myself is little to be said. Now and then I write some little verses, and, the thing done, confess it to be only another form of idleness. Or to vary my growls when I am out on the road with Picnic,[2] I hire a motor and have a spin of 100 miles, a way of ensuring appetite and prolonged sleep. Your Secretary of State for War and he for Foreign Affairs dined here some days before the break-up. I had a cheering report of you from them. Oh that I were footing the sweet herbs with you now! I have lived all my time in imagination and do still, fully enough, but in this case there 's an unsatisfied yearning. Come to me if possible when you return. Shall be eager for the note, near the end of the month. And give my love to the Mountain Maid now in her home.—Ever with the whole heart, yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] These letters are excellent examples of Meredith's chaff, of which his friends, in talk with him, were one and all the victims. Imaginary critics, invented criticisms, following upon the fact of two articles by Emile Faguet, in the *Journal des Débats*, dealing with Professor Sully's studies on Laughter.

[2] The donkey which drew his Bath chair.

To Arundell Esdaile.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Sept.* 7, 1907.

MY DEAR SIR,—A copy of your compilation[1] was forwarded to me, I think by the Routledge Firm, and I replied, mentioning your name. Do not hold me ungrateful when I say that I wish your work had been two-thirds of the length. An author with a conscience can hardly look back on all his writings with satisfaction. He sees where the true fire has not been present. And he knows that when he departs, the publishers, if there is inquiry about him, will be collecting the scraps. Not an agreeable prospect for him.—But do not fancy that I am insensible of the obligation to you.—Faithfully yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Edward Clodd.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Sept.* 12, 1907.

MY DEAR SIR REYNARD,—It seems about certain that by this time the Editor of the 'Quarterly' will, aided by admonitions of Bishops and your letter in the 'Times' of to-day, have come to take a new and more accurate view of his charming fresh acquaintance and recruit. He will be passing through emotions known to me too well. He will remember perhaps that he saw without noticing a particular brown brush beneath the nether garment. At any rate, it will have his close attention in memory now; and waving the letters of three Bishops in his hand, he will cry out words of self-execration for his myopic folly, such as another blind and temporarily happy dupe has read. Nor will the consolation of an exceedingly good article soothe him under the episcopal slaps he is receiving. Quarterly returned. With increased admiration, GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] A Bibliography of Meredith's Works.

To Herbert Trench.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Sept.* 25, 1907.

DEAR MR. HERBERT TRENCH,—Yes, if you hold to the request; though I dislike being lugged before our little world, and doubt that it does the author any good, unless he is known to be a juvenile aspirant.

Be wary of your 'Egypt' line, unless it contains a mystic meaning.

Apollo into Egypt went, and thence he brought a mummy; with hope that it would keep silent: a reputable dummy. The years embalmed, that lay behind, from light were closely shuttered. But it would speak its dusty mind: nor even the God of Song could find the rhyme for what it uttered.

I trust your grand programme will flourish through the performance.—Yours ever, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Herbert Trench.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Sept.* 27, 1907.

MY DEAR MR. TRENCH,—The poem[1] is deep in thought and takes arms against a compact multitude. So prepare for opposition. As to the verse it is open to criticism.

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[1] 'Apollo and the Fisherman.'

Your iambic step sometimes in the next line is trochaic, and probably stress is intended. The reader has to take it aloud. I can make nothing of the line where there is the name of Egypt. Still the metre does not much hamper the deep significance. Such a poem could not have the richness of 'Deirdre.' It is in its way an advance.

The good ship Immortality methinks has served her time. On the dread rock Finality, She splits, a wreck sublime. And when (according to the log) the crew took her in hand, They 'd but six shabby goes of grog per day ere hope of land. Now on the seventh rose up three, and all were of one mind; the good ship Immortality beneath the waves to find. The bo'sun said: No go of grog to prime us, Still must we, Toil on, good Lord. But here the Log is blanker than the sea.

You compel terrific imitation. Accept the flattery.—Yours warmly,
George Meredith.

To his granddaughter, Miss Joan Sturgis.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Oct.* 1, 1907.

Dear and sweet old Joan,—I should have come to your generous invitation, but that I feared I should be turning you and Dorothy and Mary and the cousins out of your beds to accommodate me. And there would have been such a lot of extra cooking. Still I was half of a mind to telegraph that I was on my way to Littlehampton, if only to see whether you touch ground with a toe when you put on the air of playing fish. Love to Dorothy and Mary, not forgetting the cousins. You are to return on 7th, I think. Come if you can (Sandie jumps on my writing-desk) the 8th, with your Mama.—Your own
George Meredith.

To Edward Clodd.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Nov.* 1, 1907.

Dear Sir Reynard,—While in the hands of the doctor, with some fever, I had in my head a splendid, partly pathetic Ballad, 'The Hunting of Sir Reynard By the 15 Merry Prelates.' They started full of Breakfast-Luncheon and confidence, sure of him, in whom they had discovered the arch-disintegrator of their Edifice. They returned four at midnight, seven next noon, three the day after, and one a week later. This one nearly came to his end. It was the first dodge of the Wily One to lead them to a chalk quarry, down which he went by a way he knew. Our prelate's horse stood with stiffened legs, and the rider was precipitated to the edge of the cliff. He was pulled back by the legs, and rode home with a heart intermittently beating. This looked ominous. But at sight of Sir Reynard cantering easily and jauntily on the road below, irritation spurred the fourteen to continue the hunt. They were led to a broad, deep ditch swollen from recent rains, and into it four of the prelates plumped and were soused.—So on, very exciting. I wish I could remember the verses. Neighbouring cottages supplied the defeated prelates with beds, stale bread, rank bacon, and the remark, 'Ah, you'll never have him.'

I am still weak, not companionable. The attack was rather sharp, but I had refreshment from the Ballad.

George Meredith.

To Mrs. J. G. Butcher.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Nov.* 13, 1907.

My dear Alice B.,—Your excursion downstairs must have given you some relief, as it does to me in thinking of you. I have been unable to write. A heap of arrears in correspondence is in the basket beside me. A chill struck me down, and at one time Bessie Nicholls took a serious view of the case. The most indomitable of attendants, she is very apprehensive. I preserved my cheerfulness, for either way it is a mere quiver of the balance to me now. When I ceased to walk briskly part of my life had ended, and I am bored by having to read belated opinions of the work I have done.

Let me hear that you are making progress. Be a Christian Scientist so far as to determine on it.

My best remembrances to your Father and J. G. B.—Yours constantly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Laurie Magnus.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 7, 1907.

DEAR SIR,—Arrears of correspondence, part of the burden of an illness, have kept me from replying to you. I have to say that I did not expect to see in my time the chief aim of my work in verse struck upon with so sure a mark. I had no expectation at all, for my views of life are taken to be eccentric. They can hardly pretend to the title of philosophy, they are so simple. They are not the views of society, it is true. But society is kept in animation by the customary, in the first place, and secondly by sentiment. It has little love of Earth (or Nature) and gives ear mainly to those who shiver with dread of the things that are, not seeing that a frank acceptance of Reality is the firm basis of the Ideal. There will be more chance of its being seen in coming days if we may have a multiplication of such pens as yours.—Yours faithfully, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. J. Inglefield.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 11, 1907.

MY DEAR JULIA,—Pressing arrears of correspondence after an illness and a repeated attack have held my hand from telling you of the deep grief with which I heard of your mother's illness and then of the end. Still more the cause of it appalled me. And she so nobly kind and considerate to all who came near her. My debt to her for her generosity to my wife in the same dread malady will always be vivid in my mind and heart. To talk with her was always a refreshment. I am sure of her courage to meet the worst.[1]

I could not travel to town, or I should have visited her often, if merely for the pleasure of conversing. The loss to you is past measuring. Tell your sister how much I feel for the family. There was a younger brother. Mention my name to him.—Yours ever warmly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. J. G. Butcher.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 22, 1907.

MY DEAR ALICE B.,—There is no consolation for such a loss as yours, beyond the thought that the life ended had been a life well lived, and was full ripe. He was one of the good men to whom kindness was of his nature. I who am so near upon following him can wish but that the closing of my eyes may be as peaceful, both physically and in review of the days gone.

I relied on your goodness to enable you to bear the blow. Give my love to the children. You will not care for an oraison funèbre. If it ever comes spontaneously from anyone it would not from me. The mind must be prepared for these heavy strokes of nature. Besides, the life gone from sight and hearing is not, if it was loved, a life lost.[1]—Yours most warmly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Refers to Mrs. Christopher Wilson's death.

To Professor James Sully.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 30, 1907.

MY DEAR SULLY,—Your sketch of the tramps will be a memorial, and that of Leslie is a portrait that brings him living before me. Good days gone! My mind is bent on the future (little for myself, as you may imagine), but in this case I look back with regret, with more than the breath of a sigh.—What theme do you now choose for making it your own? You have the art, and your personal stamp is upon everything you touch. So much so that I cannot think of your latest big book without a shout of sympathetic laughter. Can praise of a man's work go higher? I fear much that you have misjudged me in my efforts to show you how famous you are.—Warmly yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To W. Clark Russell.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Jan.* 24, 1908.

DEAR SIR,—A kind word to me in my ripe age from a brother of the Pen, whose description of blue water scenes have often given me pleasure, is very welcome. Quantity in production certainly we have, but I notice here and there good stuff, and promise among some of the younger men. Besides, you know the seventh wave. There must be a gathering of the waters before a big surge is thrown on shore. And my observation tells me that the minor work of the present day is altogether superior to that of the mid-Victorian time—and before V. The hour is usually unjust to its own.—Yours very truly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] The death of Mrs. Butcher's father, Mr. E. L. Brandreth, *aet.* 85.

To Edward Vulliamy.

Feb. 6, 1908.

My dear Ned,—It is a true good soul lost to us, but the impress will last. I feel for you all. Aunty Kitty will suffer acutely, Sarah hardly less. Mariette is at Beaulieu, on the Riviera, Will just coming from the Riviera. They will feel the blow.[1]

I have not time for more, as I have but this moment escaped from a first sitting to Strang, who is commissioned by the King to execute drawings of Members of the O. of M. to hang in the library of Windsor Castle.—Most warmly in a common grief,

George Meredith.

To Sir Francis Burnand.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Feb.* 10, 1908.

My dear Frank,—It is hard that one should strike the solemn peal of 80, and not be able to caper with the legs though the mind and heart are elastically harlequin. However, good things come at this big age, and among them your reminder that the old days are not forgotten by you. As to the calculation of the years, I think it is pretty correct. And would either of us have thought when walking the Esher roads, that we should look back with mortal eyes over such a stretch of time—and you a burnished Knight, and I receiving Deputations.—And there is Hyndman wielding the Socialist baton, to ravishing discords! What will be uppermost 80 years hence? Upon that I muse. Certainly not we two. Meanwhile I trust that you will continue to take breath heartily up to the final one. George Meredith.

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[1] The death of Miss Elizabeth Vulliamy ('Betty').

To the Duchess of Rutland.

Feb. 16, 1908.

Let the younger Diana[1] know that her good wishes come to me like the break of the cloud showing sun on a wintry day. And if by chance she should happen upon crossways, may she have an index within to direct her whither the right one leads. GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Gilbert Farquhar.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Feb.* 21, 1908.

MY DEAR GILLY FARQUHAR,—You revive the old time at the Garrick, of which resort of the world's elect you were notable as the friendliest rattler, open as the first MS. page of a novel about to be commenced by an author without a notion of his plot or his characters. Could anything be more ingenuous ? Your mention of 'Palgrave, grave pal of mine, the pall, the grave, do suit thy sombre hue, the bounding wave thy temperament, and thou dost aye recall eternal youth, therewith the Grave, the Pall,' —flatters me with the belief that I did some good portraiture in my time. He and how many of our old mates —all have gone. The worst of a long life is the seeing our friends drop by the way, and leave in our minds the flickering rushlight of them in memory. So Good-bye.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

That last word with the understanding that I am the first to go.

To Clement Shorter.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Feb.* 22, 1908.

MY DEAR MR. SHORTER,—Exonerate me—and it is true that I am as heavily burdened as ever pack-mule with replies to letters of all kinds,—but the fact that you have hit on two books that I wanted to read demands a word of acknowledgment. Any study of Napoleon interests me. I have myself printed one—but in verse! and therefore unread. A short advance into Mr. Fisher's book shows him to have the clear style of a practised intelligence, with full store of knowledge at his disposal.

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[1] Lady Diana Manners.

Keep good watch over Sir Reynard. The Fifteen Merry Prelates have, in spite of the grievous failure of their first hunt, sworn to have him; and it seems to me that he relies too much on his native dexterity. (They had prepared to be at him in the Boulter case.)—With my respects to your wife, I am, faithfully yours,

George Meredith.

To the Rt. Hon. John Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Feb.* 25, 1908.

Dearest Morley,—Tell me that you are serious about Saturday next and arrangements shall be made here, with joyful expectation.

Nothing could be better for the triumphal course of Influenza than the jolly game you propose to play with it.—This 80th of mine comes but once, thank the Lord! Since that day I have been writing letters by the score; and, as our Poet says, still they come; many demanding answers:—letters naming plays from novels, begging letters, letters of great gush, idiotic letters; one from a piteously-voiced bankrupt clergyman! No one knowing me can imagine that I like to be trotted out before the public. And I have had to bear it and smile.—Yours with all my heart, George Meredith.

Your wife will come?

To the Secretary, Liverpool Committee for Excavation and Research in Wales.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Feb.* 27, 1908.

DEAR SIR,—Researches that may even chance to throw some light on the period of the Roman occupation of Britain would be of priceless value to our National History, and a refreshment to Welshmen. We cannot hope to know in what degree Roman civilization affected the minds and put a polish on the bearing of the primitive people; it may well have been to an extent sufficient to justify a belief in the real foundation of the Legends and Poems that have come to us, showing a spirit of courteousness and chivalry in striking contrast with the barbarism of the subsequent invaders. But any effort is worth the cost that we may know more than we do at present. The Liverpool Committee for Research has undertaken a work deserving the support of the nation, I need hardly say, of Wales. GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Llewelyn Williams, M.P.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Feb.* 28, 1908.

DEAR SIR,—Put it to the meeting of Welshmen in celebration of the memory of St. David that it is one among many regrets incident to advanced age that I am unable to be with them. St. David is one of the great bonds holding Welshmen together, and they are of a more fervent blood than men of other races. To them there is no dead past. The far yesterday is quick at their hearts, however heartily they may live in the present.—It is a matter for rejoicing to see that Welshmen are in all walks of life making their energies more and more felt. . . . May the blessing of God be upon you while you are offering up your hearts this day to your patron saint.—Yours faithfully, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To G. W. Harris.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 4, 1908.

My dear Sir,—Your mention of President Lincoln's birthday touches on my pang of grief when hearing of his end at the hands of the theatrical assassin. Such is the state of the world just now, that I am often in alarm concerning President Roosevelt.

As to my books of poetry, you write generously. Over here it is hardly acknowledged that I am more than a writer of occasional verse, and that is usually subjected to the mention of 'obscurities.' But the same has happened to other men, and we should remember that, when a full hearing has been won, the praise is abundant. You have done much to help me.[1]—Most truly yours, George Meredith.

To Clement Shorter.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 19, 1908.

Dear Mr. Shorter,—My regret in not being able to come among you is the greater for my having on this occasion something to say, although I have found as a speaker that when on my legs I am off my head. But that is not the case with you, so when you have risen, do not forget Greenwood's suggestion for the purchase of the Suez Canal Shares, by which England has profited so largely in every way. It is only one instance of his patriotic forethought. I have noted throughout his articles how constantly and shrewdly his eye has been set on foreign writers covertly hostile to our country—one living here with us, for example—that caused the bull-dog in his own position to give out polite intimations of a warning growl that he was watchful. Literature owes much to him for honest criticisms and the encouragement of his subordinates thereto.—Faithfully ever,

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[1] Mr. Harris had published some articles on Meredith's Works.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To T. Herbert Warren.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *April* 12, 1908.

DEAR MR. WARREN,—Deep love and study of the suave Virgilian line have informed your hand to give us this poem, truly a not unworthy issue, and coming out of a furnace ; for anything less excellent would have shrivelled in the process, and have been intolerable. This will tell you of the pleasure I have had in reading it. Such might have been in Virgil's mind on the eve of his end :—the allusion to Propertius, the raptures over Catullus, the reverence for the ' trenchant son of Rome,' whose majestic verse must have thrilled him, sensitive as he was to all forms of beauty. So much so that he must have felt shrewdly his having been very imitative, and one can understand his recurring impulse to commit the Aeneid to the flames. I am indebted to you for much pleasure. The verse of the day too rarely gives it.—Most faithfully,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. J. G. Butcher.

April 19, 1908.

MY DEAR ALICE B.,—The plovers' eggs have come and are very acceptable, except that they remind me of better days for you. It is good that you are in country air and under supervision of the marvellous 'Grannie.'[1] I cannot remember a time when she failed to show me a smiling face—and of how few can that be said ! The shower of letters since my oppressive 80th is abating ; still daily I have one or two for answer. It is hard at my age to be pitchforked up in the public eye. Some would like it.

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[1] Mrs. Gordon.

I am not a Martin Tupper who said, when he had been flung on the accustomed heap after much pitchforking, that he would rather be an object of abuse than not be mentioned at all.

And I have had to write a poem—for the Union Jack Club's Album, while undergoing the torments of a heavy cold, all because of 'my great name' which the Album must have.

I was too ill to see the Major, who called to urge the matter upon Bessy Nicholls, so fascinating her that she bent her energies to cajole me. Also a sitting to Mr. Strang on behalf of the King for members of the O. M. to be hung in the Library at Windsor—my worn old features!

Peace will come, I still hope, and blither days for you.

George Meredith.

To the Rt. Hon. Viscount Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *May* 4, 1908.

Dearest Morley,—When I heard of the Coronet, or rather, saw it in the political heavens, poised above your head, my feelings at first must have resembled your own.

After some turmoil, I decided that it was good for you and the country. It saves you from the heckling of the ignoramus in the Commons, and more, you will not have to raise your voice for an address to constituents. The state of your throat has caused me anxiety. As for the Rose of Patterdale, her Coronet has been too long withheld. She won it on the Westmoreland-Cumberland hills and fells. I shall rejoice to see you both wearing it bridally.

So then Saturday will be a merry day for me. Distinctions are a small matter to seniors whose heads have been among the stars, but it is as well, pour savourer bien la chose, to imagine us for a moment juveniles and seeing the Pleiades descend on a head——? Tell me your hourly train that my fly may meet you.—Love to the Viscountess. Heartily, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To W. M. Meredith.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *May* 19, 1908.

MY DEAR WILL,—Here are proofs for the 'Oxford and Cambridge R.' Also at Riette's bidding, the illustration of Cecil Morgan's invention, which will, I hope, be found practicable. Let me hear of your condition, how you bear the return to work. The thunder of the guns at Aldershot should help Daisy's composition. A cat set screaming on a bed under the sheets of which the composer lay did wonders for him. Tell her I think she will astound the public, and do more than ten thousand muffin bells for the cause of the Suffragettes in proving that Woman is Man's superlative. GEORGE M.

To Sir George Lewis.

May 28, 1908.

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE,—The petits bouquets of Upmann which you have sent me—and it is a timely and generous gift—came much nearer to the old Havana-leaf flavour than any I have tried to smoke of late years; and I have beaten about over London for something to remind me of a good time gone. In future I shall apply to Mark of Jermyn Street, with the magic of your name.—Most truly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To C. E. Hecht,
The Rational Food Reform Association.

June 19, 1908.

DEAR SIR,—I am unworthy to be among you, for I drink wine and I smoke. How preach to sinners when one is guilty of these vices and unrepentant? Eating of meat has never been to my taste. But an English cook who can make vegetables of good savour will not come to a country cottage even on liberal wages. So I have in some degree to conform to the national habit: excess in which accounts for numerous maladies, to say nothing of captious tempers. Therefore I wish well to your crusade, though unfit to join in it.—Yours truly,

George Meredith.

To C. E. Hecht.

Box Hill, Dorking, *June* 25, 1908.

Dear Sir,—You can enrol me, seeing that you accept my disqualification. The excess of flesh-eating ministers to the Doctors as much as drink. I have never cared for it.—Yours truly, George Meredith.

To Frederick Greenwood.

Box Hill, Dorking, *July* 3, 1908.

My dear Greenwood,—Since that oppressive eightieth of mine I have had it on mind and heart to reply to your terse and pregnant few words of greeting, which told me so much, reminding me of the days when I was looking for the afternoon issue of the Pall Mall Gazette, sure of good writing. I was advised to insert a paragraph in the Times. That was too lofty a position for me. So I had to go through the drudgery. And still they come, and how little it means. However, the words you sent were gold. If they had not been written from a sick bed, they would have inspirited me. I have to suppose that your enemy is gout. As to our country, if the people were awake, they would submit to be drilled. The Territorial 15 days is ludicrous; and the fear of imposing drill for at least a year seems to me a forecast of the national tragedy.—Yours loving George Meredith.

To Frederick Greenwood.

Box Hill, *July* 7, 1908.

My dear Greenwood,—I have told the publishers of the Oxford and Cambridge Review to send you a copy of the number containing my Poem 'The Call.' . . . My son asked me to send something for it, and this matter being on my mind I let him have it. I think the subject pressing enough for it to be read. Those who know the German mind are of opinion that there is an intention to try conclusions with England when Germany has ships to protect a landing (thought to be quite possible), and while the huge army is kept from the corruption of a long peace. Not for nothing did the German stipulate at the Hague for the right of mining the sea ways. With the use of miners an inferior Navy can match the giant for temporary purposes.

Let me hope that your recovery will be firm.—Ever yours, George Meredith.

To Mrs. Sturgis.

Box Hill, Dorking, *August* 18, 1908.

My dearie,—Fresh from a duo with Sandie I take pen to congratulate you on the happy result of your journey. It was only at Overstrand that you could hope for a full blast of the North wind, and your evident wish has been granted. I see you on the sands below, in wraps of furs, with an affectionate foot-warmer behind a screen, joyfully remote from Givons and comfort, thoroughly given up to your holiday. Fluffy; warm little body will also serve.—You will despise my report that here we are only on the edge of winter. Unlike you in your sagacious forethought, I shall not be braced to meet November's cold blasts or frosts. And if I go down to the S. coast, as I begin to doubt, I shall be in full summer, and get more relaxed. The comparison between us is all to your advantage. Think of that when your teeth chatter over the fire in the fisherman's hut and the baby fisherman whines.—Dorothy is to be told that her letter pleased me. Give my love to all of Lewis blood.—Have you muffs and woollen gauntlets ? Pray, dance as much as you can, never mind place or partner.—Enviously,

George Meredith.

To Lady Lewis.

Box Hill, Dorking, *August* 19, 1908.

My dear Lady Lewis,—The objection to the making dramas of my novels is, that I could not allow any dialogues of my writing to be put by others into the mouths of the personae, and I have no longer heart for the task. I have had to say as much to many applicants.

The Dearie has her choice of the seasons, though I believe it was the thought of being close to you that moved her. The plunge out of Summer headlong into Winter seems to me a more splendid performance, in the way of gallant determination, than the high dive. She is, and let her know it for the increase of her circulation, admired. Before she went I described the charms of a N. Easter at Overstrand. Is there not a German story of one who went out to learn to shiver. And poor Harry too ! I see him bowing to the wind with his native politeness and a chattering inward. Exclamation : 'It 's all for her ! ' I grieve at your loss of the family stock dove.

G. Meredith.

To Mrs. Sturgis.

Box Hill, Dorking, *August* 20, 1908.

My Dearie,—We have now S. west wind, fleets of white cloud and breezy foliage. But there are showers, and you may have them. Be careful as to your hold of the umbrella in your dash to the Danish Pavilion, for the gusts at Overstrand are very treacherous. Several women there have been taken up, and landed below the cliffs—comfortably enough, as it chanced, but causing perturbation. One old lady, however, on her way to Church, a Mrs. Humfer (you may look for the name in the Churchyard), went aloft, and unfortunately, just on the ridge of the cliffs, her 'brella turned its sustaining cup upward and down she came, by good luck in the water. There the rescuer heard her saying, as if in response with the Minister at Lessons: 'The Scripture moveth us in sundry places'; and she continued repeating it. For this reason, take my counsel, and the moment you feel the 'brella pulling, let go at once. It may save you from another surgeon. In any case, I would not have you be the talk of Cromer, and the subject of Ballads.—The news here is of Charlie Lewin's marriage, 16th Sept., at Holmbury. GEORGE MEREDITH.

To S. V. Doraiswamy.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *August* 23, 1908.

DEAR SIR,—The lines of verse that you have so complimentarily addressed to me are, apart from their poetical feeling, remarkable in their mastery of our language, as coming from a young East Indian. I should be glad to hail them as a happy sign of the interest of Indians in things English. But at the same time I trust that when you write to publish you will have set your mind on the characters, scenery, and literature of your country. For so will you be able best to interest and instruct us English. We are looking to you closely for more intimate knowledge of you. Of Indian literature and thought we know much, and it is with reverence; of Indian character we know little. You can help to enlighten us.

As to how I was paid by my publishers for the novels you name, enough that they treated me in accordance with my reputation at the time. One must be popular to be paid well for one's work.—Yours very truly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To René Galland.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Sept.* 6, 1908.

DEAR M. RENÉ GALLAND,—You will by this time have finished with your grandes manœuvres (and I wish this duty to the country were the same over here with our young men). Now it is for the pen. And again I have a wish: it is that it were to be engaged on fruitfuller work than a consideration of the value of my writings. As to the photographs, there could be little objection, except to your expenditure of money: a condition that is not pleasing to me. And why give your time to the pushing me forth as a prominent author, when I have no claim to popularity in England! Reflect on this before you begin. Besides, my ambition is a torpid beast, quite complacent in seeing others occupy the superior position. In any case, forbear to touch on my first volume of poems: they are worthless, immature stuff of a youth in his teens, who had not found his hand. I hoped at one time to think of them as dead to the public. Let them be so to you.—Yours very truly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Rt. Hon. Viscount Morley.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Sept.* 19, 1908.

MY DEAREST MORLEY,—You are again in harness. You cannot ever be out of it, with India on your head.

But I had the hope that you were still breathing Highland air, for a help to bear the weight.

As for me, my excursions are in verse. If you can spare an hour of the afternoon this coming week, name your day—after Wednesday, and I will motor to Flowermead. Two days in advance will enable me to make arrangements.

I have been reading the essays. Machiavelli and Guicciardini impress me again with the serenity of judgment shown throughout. And I am complacent as to the skill in the treatment of Theophano, a piece of writing always effusive, which Harrison is sure to be; but too evidently swollen by recent Byzantine Histories, Schlumberger and Diehl.

It will refresh me to see you and your wife, who, in foul despite of all changes wrought by the Father of the Years, will ever be my mountain maid. GEORGE MEREDITH.

Bessy Nicholls and Sandie will accompany me, for he loves a motor.

To the Duchess of Rutland.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Sept.* 19, 1908.

DEAR DUCHESS OF RUTLAND,—I look on the presentment of Lady Diana, whether Time has wrought the miracle in her or in my former blind sight under fascination of the elder sister, it is useless to speculate. She now holds her own, and to judge by her letter to me, can express herself in a way to give a picture as good as the photograph. This is not usual.

The letter is pronouncedly spontaneous. It exhibits the heart in the hand of the writer. I forbear to say how much I like it.—Your most grateful

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Rt. Hon. Viscount Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Sept.* 26, 1908.

Dearest of Friends,—I am between the horns of a dilemma. My usual motor Company (and I know not of another) write that they are unable to supply me with a car on Monday. It is irritating. I thought that I had become exempt from the senseless wrath at circumstance. But when a surging desire has an adverse wind blowing dead against it, there will be foam, even in the breast of the aged.

I will telegraph. If there is not to be a motor it would be as well to put back our meeting for a few days. Der Teufel!—Ever yours, George Meredith.

To Professor James Sully.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Sept.* 26, 1908.

My dear Sully,—On Monday I have an engagement to motor to visit Morley at Wimbledon. But my usual Motor company in London tell me this morning that they have no motor to spare. What to do is not yet decided. Postpone your call on me for a few days, for though it is possible that I may be here on Monday, there is the doubt. —I hope you are at work, and upon a book that will waken as keen a literary excitement in France as did the latest. I confess to having revelled in the French articles. Their ill-suppressed jealousy at your having taken for thorough treatment a subject that they considered absolutely their own, and the sickly grins, between politeness and spite, I found, as you must have felt, very interesting. —Yours ever truly, George Meredith.

To the Rt. Hon. Viscount Morley.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Sept.* 29, 1908.

Dearest Morley,—I left you yesterday with the conviction, that for the amount and nature of the work you do, it is imperative that you should at once begin to take more food. There is a way of encouraging appetite. There is—and a good way—the Weir Mitchell system. Before a meal, say dinner, massage, and a rest, after which you can eat well. And this aptitude increases. A massageuse did the work on me, with effect. You would like her. She is a friend of Bessy Nicholls, her name Tun—Something. I called her Tunbelly, and she answered to it. I mention her because her charge is moderate, and she is a motherly soul. But massage is easily obtained, and for the rousing of appetite and lively progression of nourishment sovereign. Pray, try it. Briskness at meals would soon come, and work would be far easier. You would not abandon office without serious cause. I dread to think of the cause.—Ever whole-heartedly, George Meredith.

To Mrs. J. E. B. Seely.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Oct.* 15, 1908.

Dear Mrs. Seely,—The handsome squad is fast becoming a regiment, and I am glad to have the presentation of it. Acclamations should greet the mother who, in a country that is accused of dwindling numbers, so nobly vindicates our productiveness and helps to the perpetuation of a good stock.

The captain of the troop is exactly as I knew him. His lieutenant will do work at the call for it. No. 4 had a nervous twitch when facing the shot of the camera. We all wish her to have kept her natural features; but there is a touch of reality that brings her singularly home to us and vivifies the actual scene. . . .

Present my compliments to the Colonel, and tell him that I read his quiet and sufficient replies to S. African hecklers and others, and rejoice that we have such a man on the upward steps.—Most faithfully yours,

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Seymour Trower.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Oct.* 16, 1908.

My dear Lady BytheWey,—Fortune has been perverse. Usually I am here and (I am stricken with perversity in saying it) you must hit upon the sole occasion when I am consigned to a motor car for coming to see you. Or it may be my own fault in not knowing that you would come. Evidently there was no wireless communication of hearts. Then which one was to blame? It has to be thrown on Fortune, just as our ignorant forefathers did it. But the news for me was vexatious when I returned. Fulfil your promise. If I miss you a second time, we may know that malignity is in the air. Your gift of the pears was timely and very welcome. I have them daily. Find some words of scornful affection from me for your Bluewater Captain who has not a word to say for our overlooked poor little army. As I wish him long life he may need more of it.—Your regretful

George Meredith.

To Mrs. Saleeby.

Oct. 17, 1908.

My dear Monica,—Mr. Francis Galton bears a name welcome in every English household. I have been motoring over Sussex—a variation of my daily excursion in a donkey-chair. To that I am reduced. And worse—

the sexton has filled one of my ears, and seems to be at work on the other; so that conversation is not smooth or pleasant for me, and hardly can be agreeable to my friends. Wherefore, I do not encourage them to come here, though I love them. It is in these days no matter for regret when daughters are born to the house. Girls are now active in the world. Even the famous Christabel is to be admired for her courage and prompt intelligence, despite the harm she may be doing to her cause. Your husband ran against me on the subject of marriage, owing to a remark I dropped to an interviewer. Well, girls are now earning an independence. Few of them see happy marriages around them, and the indissolubility of the tie scares them. Hence a choice of the marriage libre—no good thing for them.—Yours warmly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Miss Dorothea Landau.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Oct.* 17, 1908.

DEAR MISS LANDAU,—Your portrait of G. F. Watts gives me visually the man vivid in my recollection. That of yourself will be a memory. There is physical confidence and natural pride of stature in the loose droop of the arms, without any crispation de poings, for a sign of nervousness. And that is proper to the individuality of the figure. So that I can feel sure of your not swinging arms as you walk, which is the way with Englishwomen; for the reason, in most cases, that they have not been drilled to walk from the hips. Your visit and the introduction to your mother gave me great pleasure.—Most faithfully,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Dr. H. G. Plimmer.

Oct. 29, 1908.

My dear Doctor,—Please read the enclosed[1] for which you mainly are responsible; and if approved, send on to Gollancz. Bear in mind that it is an official bit of work, done without enough of meditation. I have the hope of welcoming you and Robin and the flying Verandah here some early day.—Ever at heart, George Meredith.

To the Editor of the 'Times.'

Box Hill, Dorking, *Nov.* 24, 1908.

By the wise and benevolent command of King Edward the letters of his Royal Mother are now given to the world in pleasantly legible type, at a cost that may seem to be almost a gift.

The priceless value of the letters is acknowledged at home and abroad. The books she published in her lifetime showed her affectionate, womanly nature. In these letters we see that even in her opening career as a sovereign she had gained a knowledge of statecraft. Her supervision of her ministers was constant. At critical moments in the history of her reign we see how tremblingly sensitive she was to the nation's honour and safety. Altogether a most noble lady, given fully to the business of her office, a true public servant, and maintaining in her high position, exposed to fury of the winds of the four quarters, serenity with simplicity of character. The book of Queen Victoria's Letters is one for every household having a bookshelf. George Meredith.

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[1] The MS. of the 'Ode to Milton.'

To Douglas Freshfield.[1]

Nov. 1908.

The medallion touches me as a further instance of the good will of your committee showed so genially when a deputation came here on my last birthday. Testimony enough! Pray let it be known that I am moved to grateful affection.

To Holman Hunt.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 17, 1908.

DEAR HOLMAN HUNT,—Your gallantry in going to Burlington House[2] had been mentioned to me, and I envied you—not as being one of the audience, but for proving legs and hearing. At the same time I remember sadly that you are now sharing Milton's woe, most grievous for a painter. That you bear the affliction with fortitude, I can believe. It is nevertheless a cutting away from the world. This is the state of age for us. You touch me deeply in your kind letter. Probably your wife reads this, and I beg her to accept my respects and regards. As to us two, we will say that the Gods may rob us of everything except the heart to endure.—Ever warmly yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Professor James Sully.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Dec.* 24, 1908.

MY DEAR SULLY,—The Season's best wishes to you, though I hardly like to speak of them, for I have gone through your present trial.

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[1] Mr. Douglas Freshfield received this letter from Meredith thanking the committee of the Society of Authors for the copy of the medallion portrait of himself executed by Mr. Spicer Simson, which they had forwarded for his acceptance.

[2] This refers to the Milton celebrations.

The best to say is that I hope you may both of you have strength to endure.

The Essay on Examination of Beauty has interested and instructed me. I have seen you, as in the great Lecture, that is, Lesson of Anatomy of Rembrandt, standing among your pupils, scalpel in hand, and on the plank beneath you Helen of Troy. They, intent on the lovely body, are all for Einfühlung, and when the Professor's knife is about to descend, there are shrieks of interposition. He explains that such sovereign beauty must have an informing centre. 'But she was of the God!' they cry. 'Science,' he answers, 'has nought to do with fiction'; and he cuts, and there is desolation on the countenances of the Einfühlung's horde, in contrast with his ravenous inquest. No room for more. George Meredith.

To the Secretary of the Royal Hospital for Incurables.

1908.

The Appeal for subscriptions to the Royal Hospital for Incurables, Putney Heath, should strike to the heart of all who have the common humane feeling for their fellows. For here is the case of utter helplessness under an impending inevitable doom. These poor sufferers have passed hope and still they draw our breath of life. Their position has only to be brought home to the general mind for subscriptions to flow, if we would be worthy of our good repute for charity. George Meredith.

To Miss Dorothea Landau.

Box Hill, Dorking, *Jan.* 4, 1909.

Dear Miss Dorothea Landau,—You have hit the gourmet in me with remarkable accuracy of aim, for he finds the caviar you send him a novelty in the epicure's list of dainties, and the wretch would exhaust you with his eloquent tribute to its merits, but for a deeper feeling that takes the word from him, and that is pleasure in the thought that you and your mother bear me in mind. I had lost your address and fancied you to be in a climate where there is a sky. Italy knocks at my breast day and night.

Present my respects to your mother. As for you, I shall always be at ease in thinking of you as occupied in a joyful career,—ohne Hast, ohne Rast, untroubled as Nature's day and night, tempests a mere diversion, to keep the air from stagnancy.—Most truly yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Editor of the 'English Review.'

BOX HILL, DORKING, *Jan.* 1909.

DEAR SIR,—Gossip is hard to deal with. Some years back a little book on Chelsea came to me wherein I saw it stated that I had left Rossetti's house because of the appearance of ham and eggs on his breakfast plate: 'it was too much for me.' The publication was obscure, the instance given absurd, and I let it pass, as I do usually with newspaper tattle. These reviewers do not reflect on their chance of wounding.—What I must have said to some friend was that Rossetti's habits were ruinous for his health, and I mentioned the plate of thick ham and fried eggs, taken at once on the descent from his bedroom. I ventured to speak to him of the walk of at least a mile before this trying meal. But he disliked physical exercise, and he was wilful, though he could join in a laugh at his ways. The main point is that he came down with a head full of his work, and, not to be disturbed during the day, he chose a dish that would sustain him through it. The system could not continue for long, of which I had the sorrowful prognostic. Devotion to his work in contempt of our nature killed him.—On no other subject have I spoken of this dear fellow but with the affection I felt—sometimes playfully with regard to his peculiar habits, I daresay; never in the gossip's manner. —Yours faithfully, George Meredith.

To Wilfrid Meynell.

Box Hill, *Feb.* 3, 1909.

My dear Mr. Meynell,—The love of all the Meynells, let all the Meynells know, is precious to me. And the book of the Poems[1] was very welcome, though a thought of the poet's broken life gives pain. What he might further have done hangs at the closing page. Your part in his history should help to comfort you. What we have of him is mainly due to the Meynell family.

Our Portia, I may suppose to be now in Italy, and Italy seems to me her natural home. For me, I drag on, counting more years and not knowing why. I have to lean on an arm when I would walk, and I am humiliated by requiring at times a repetition of sentences. This is my state of old age. But my religion of life is always to be cheerful. Though I see little of my friends, I live with them.—Ever to be counted yours,

George Meredith.

To Herr Eugen Frey.

Box Hill, Dorking,
England, *Feb.* 19, 1909.

Dear Sir,—You are fully at liberty to quote from my works as the occasion may require, and I have to thank you for your trouble in doing so. As to the Library Edition of the Poems, I have to say that I was careless about it, as the English, unlike the Americans, have not accepted me in the form of a poet. I had to pay for the publication of my books of verse. Indeed, the run of the novels started from American appreciation.—I have directed my publishers to send you the book of my 'Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History.' They will need to be read twice—and that is much against them in this country.—Believe me to be, yours most truly, GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] Francis Thompson, *Selected Poems.*

To Thomas Hardy.

BOX HILL, DORKING, *March* 2, 1909.

DEAR MR. HARDY,—The French Review herewith comes to my address and is, as you see by the superscription, intended for you. I am reminded that you are among the kind souls who thought of me on my 80th, and have not been thanked for their testimony of it. The book[1] was welcome all the more as being a sign that this big work was off your mind. How it may have been received I cannot say, but any book on so large a scale has to suffer the fate of Panorama, and must be visited again and again for a just impression of it to be taken. I saw that somewhere in your neighbourhood it was represented in action. That is the way to bring it more rapidly home to the mind. But the speaker of Josephine's last words would have to be a choice one.—Very truly yours, GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] *The Dynasts.*

To John Presland.

Box Hill, Dorking, *March* 28, 1909.

Dear Sir,—Your Joan has given me much pleasure in the reading, with a touch on the springs of hopefulness as well. For these are days of the many writers aiming to win the public, and your aim is to make a contribution to Literature. You have chosen to set Joan on a high plane, and you keep to the classic tone.[1] Doubtless you have read Quicherat's account of her trial at Rouen, wherein we see how at times the peasant springs out in a retort on her tormentors. Such realism you avoid. It would not have compromised her dignity—a poor word in relation to so noble a soul. It would have been salt in the drama. However, you have done a fine piece of work.—Yours truly, George Meredith.

To Theodore Watts-Dunton.

Box Hill, Dorking, *April* 13, 1909.

My dear Theodore,—The blow was heavy on me.[2] I had such confidence in his powers of recovery. The end has come! That brain of the vivid illumination is extinct. I can hardly realize it when I revolve the many times when at the starting of an idea the whole town was instantly ablaze with electric light. Song was his natural voice. He was the greatest of our lyrical poets—of the world, I could say, considering what a language he had to wield.—But if I feel the loss of him as part of our life torn away, how keenly must the stroke fall on you—and at a time of prostration from illness! Happily you have a wife for support and consolation. That helps to comfort me in my dire distress of mind on behalf of your stricken household, which I see beneath the shadow.—I will hire a motor and be with you when I know that you are in better health, and we can talk. My respects to your wife. GEORGE MEREDITH.

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[1] *Joan of Arc*, a drama.

[2] The death of Algernon Charles Swinburne.

This was George Meredith's last letter.

On Sunday night, the sixteenth of May 1909, he was taken ill, and on the Tuesday following, at the hour of dawn, he passed away, conscious almost to the end. Dr. Hearnden, to whom he already owed recovery from a dangerous collapse, devotedly attended him; his son and daughter and his faithful nurse Bessie Nicholls being with him to the end.

After cremation, all that was mortal of George Meredith was placed, as he had desired, beside his wife's grave at Dorking.

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